ADVENT

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The Advent

Swift is Dadhikra, him let us now affirm and let us do the work for the Heaven and the Earth. May the Dawns arising speed me on, may they carry me beyond all stumblings.

(*Rig Veda* IV. 39. 1.) SRI AUROBINDO

The ADVENT

APRIL, 1957

CONTENTS

		Page
EDITORIALS:	—*Nolini Kanta Gupta*	
THE PSYCHIC BEING		... 5
THE DIVINE GRACE		... 9
VEDIC HYMN	—*Sri Aurobindo*	11
TOWARDS UNIFICATION	—*Sri Aurobindo*	... 12
THE TEACHING OF SRI AUROBINDO	—*M. P. Pandit*	... 15
SRI AUROBINDO	—*K. C. Varadachari*	... 20
THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER	—*Rishabhchand*	... 32
THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN SRI AUROBINDO	—*Indra Sen*	... 42
THE LIFE DIVINE (An Outline)	—*N. Pearson*	... 45
Paramé Vyoman IN THE RIG VEDA	—*A. B. Purani*	... 46
REVIEWS:		
THE ATHARVA VEDA: VRATYAKANDA	—*M. P. Pandit*	... 62
INDIA'S ANCIENT LITERATURE	—*S. M.*	... 67

We are not here
to do politics
but to serve
the Divine.

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THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS *

THE PSYCHIC BEING

THE psychic is like an electric wire that connects the generator with the lamp ; the lamp being the body, the visible form. Its function is likewise, that is to say, if the psychic were not there in Matter, it could have no direct contact with the Divine. It is because of the psychic presence that there can be a direct contact between Matter and the Divine. And every human being can be told : "You carry the Divine within you, you have only to enter within yourself and you will find Him." It is a direct, special, transmuting infusion into the most inconscient and obscure matter to awaken it once more step by step to the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Presence and finally the Divine Himself.

It is a thing characteristic of earthly creatures. It is a speciality of the earth. But only in the human being does the psychic become more conscious, more formed and also more independent ; it is there individualised. It is the presence of the psychic that makes of man an exceptional being,

* Based on the Mother's Talks

so much so that beings of other domains in the Universe, those, for example, belonging to what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, the demi-gods and even the gods are very eager to take a physical body upon earth so that they can have the experience of the psychic. These beings possess certainly many qualities which men have not, but they lack this direct Divine Presence which is quite exceptional, which is a fact of the earth and is found nowhere else. All these inhabitants of the higher worlds, of Higher Mind and Overmind and other regions do not possess a psychic being.

Naturally, the beings of the vital world do not have it either. They do not regret it, they do not want it. In their origin of course, they descended directly from the Divine, but that was only in their origin and it is so long ago. Now they have no direct contact with the Divine within them, they do not have the psychic being. If they had converted themselves under these conditions nothing would have remained of them. Because they are made wholly of the opposite movement. They are entirely made of self-assertion, despotic power, alienation from the origin and the utmost disdain for all that is pure and beautiful and noble. Those only, very rare, among them who wish to be converted do one thing immediately : take a physical body. But others do not want it ; that ties them, restricts them to a rule which they refuse.

* *

It is a fact—I do not like to say it often to him, for he has such a high opinion of himself that he needs no encouragement, but it is a fact and hence I am obliged to state—that man has this exceptional virtue of having in him the psychic being. But to tell you the truth he does not seem to turn it to good account, he does not appear to consider it at all as a desirable thing, so far as one can judge from the manner in which he treats this Presence. He prefers to it his mental ideas, he prefers to it his vital desires, he prefers to it his bodily habits.

There is a story in the Bible which I always liked. Two brothers were there, Esau and Jacob. Esau returns home hungry and tells his brother Jacob that he is very hungry. He was so hungry that he proposed to his brother, "Listen, if you give me your plate of pottage—Jacob had prepared a dish of pottage—I will give you up my birthright". One can understand the story in quite a superficial way. But it has a deeper meaning.

The birthright is the right of being the son of God. And the man was ready to give up his divine right in order to eat because he was hungry. It is a very old story, but it is eternally true.

* *

At its origin, the psychic begins by being merely a kind of a divine spark within oneself, a spark of the divine consciousness. Out of this spark will slowly emerge an independent conscious being which will have its own action and its own will.

The progress of the psychic consists in its formation, building and organisation. It grows into a conscious individuality through successive lives ; for there can be progress only upon earth, in the physical world ; it is not possible everywhere. In the psychic world there is a kind of rest, full of beatitude. One remains there as one is, still, without moving.

The progress is like the progress of a child that grows. It is a continuous growing. For a long time, in most human beings the psychic is a continuously growing entity. It is not a fully individualised, fully conscious being and master of itself. It needs to be born in many lives one after another so that it may build itself and become fully conscious.

But that has an end. There comes a moment when the being is fully built up, fully individualised, fully master of itself and its destiny. When one such psychic being incarnates in a human body, it makes a great difference. This human being is so to say born free ; he is not bound to circumstances or surroundings or heredity like ordinary human beings. He comes into the world and he has the impression that he is come purposely to accomplish something, he has a work to do, a mission to fulfil.

From that point of view the progress of his growth has ended. That is to say, it is no longer necessary for him to be reborn in a body. Till then reincarnation was obligatory. For it is in the physical life and in the physical body that he grows little by little until he becomes a wholly conscious being. But once he is completely formed, he is free, in the sense that he can, at will, take a body or not take.

When a psychic being incarnates, it throws itself down into inconscience, because the physical world and even a human consciousness, whatever it may be, are very unconscious in comparison with the psychic consciousness. It is as if it fell on its head and it is stunned. Generally, but for some rare exceptions, for a long time it knows nothing; it does not know where

it is, what it does, nor why it is there, nothing. It is in a great difficulty to express itself, especially in a baby who has not a brain but only the embryo of a brain. So it is very rare for a child to show that it contains within itself an exceptional being. That happens, but generally it takes time.

The psychic awakes slowly from its dazed condition and slowly it becomes aware that it is there for some reason and by choice. But the intensive mental education that one usually receives shuts out completely the psychic consciousness. Then a mass of circumstances, happenings of all kinds, emotions and sensations and various other things are needed to open the inner doors and to enable one to begin to remember—remember that one has come from another world, one has come for a very definite reason. If the psychic however had chanced to fall upon a little knowledge instead of falling into a world of ignorance, there could have been a quicker contact.

* *

There are not many souls upon earth. Evidently those who have reached a certain culture, a certain growth, a certain individualisation have instinctively the tendency to come together and form groups. It is then that we come across in particular epochs and climes cultivated beings gathering together. But you must not believe that that gives in any way the exact measure of human culture and growth. That is only a spray of foam on the surface. Even among those who already form a selection, there is not perhaps one in a thousand who can be called truly an individual being, conscious of himself, united with his psychic being, governed by his inner law and therefore partially at least if not wholly free from external influences; because being a conscious entity when these influences come he sees them, those that seem to agree with his inner growth and normal development he accepts and those that contradict he rejects. And instead of being a chaos, or in any case a frightful mixture, he is an organised individual being, conscious of himself, moving in life knowing where he wants to go and how to go.

That is the best of mankind that Nature is capable of producing. They are men still, but the top of mankind. They are ready to become something else. But unless and until one becomes that, one remains in greater part an animal with only just a little beginning of manhood. It is only that that one can call Man. And I am saying this in the hope that you will become such a one.

THE DIVINE GRACE

When you are in a certain set of circumstances and when certain things happen, these things often go against your desire or against what appears to you best. And you regret and say: "Oh ! How it would have been better had it been otherwise ! ' It does not matter whether the thing concerned is small or big.

The years pass, events roll on. You progress, become more conscious, understand better. And when you look back, you discover, at first with surprise, later on with a smile, that the famous circumstances which once appeared to you disastrous or unfavourable were just the very best thing that could happen for your needed progress. And if you were a little wise you would say, "truly, the Divine Grace is infinite !"

And when this happens to you a good number of times, you begin to understand that in spite of man's blindness and wrong appearances, the Grace is at work everywhere and because of the Grace it is the best possible that happens in the state where the world is at a given moment.

It is because our vision is limited or because we are blinded by our preferences that we are unable to discover why things are as they are. But when one begins to see one enters into that state of wonder which nothing can describe. Behind the appearances one finds this infinite, wonderful, all-powerful Grace that knows everything, organises everything, arranges everything, and leads us, whether we want it or not, whether we know it or not, towards the supreme goal, the union with the Divine, the awareness of the Divine Consciousness and becoming one with it.

Thus living in the action and the presence of the Grace one lives a life full of delight and wonder, the sense of a marvellous power and at the same time, full of a quiet and complete trust which nothing can shake.

* *

Whatever may be the faith and the trust you have in the Divine Grace, whatever your capacity of seeing it at work in all circumstances, at every moment and at all points of life, you can never fully understand the marvellous immensity of its action and the precision and the exactitude with which it works. Never shall one grasp in what degree the Grace does everything, is behind everything, organises everything in order that the advance

towards the divine realisation may be as swift, as complete, as total as it can be under the given circumstances of the world.

As soon as you come in contact with it, you find that there is not a second in time, not a point in space which does not show in a signal manner this ceaseless work of the Grace, its constant intervention. And once you have seen that, you feel you are never up to the mark. For you must never forget that you must not have fear or anguish or regret or recoil or even suffering. If you were in union with this Grace, if you saw it everywhere, you would begin to live a life of exultation, all power and infinite happiness. And that would be the best possible collaboration in the Divine Work.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

VEDIC HYMN

THE HORSE

Hymn to Dadhikravan (*Rig Veda* IV. 40)

1. Dadhikravan is he of whom now we must do the work; may all the Dawns speed me on the path! For the Waters and for the Dawn and the Sun and Brihaspati, he of the puissance, the Victor.

2. May this Power of being who seeks the full-bringing and seeks the Light and who abides in all activity turn into inspiration the impulsions of the Dawn, may he abide in their speed that carries us beyond. Dadhikravan who is the truth in his running,—yea, he gallops and he flies,—brings into being the impulsion, the abundant force, the heavenly light.

3. When he runs, when he speeds in his passge, as the wing of the Bird is a wind that blows about him in his greed of the gallop; as the wing that beats about the breast of the rushing Eagle, so about the breast of Dadhikravan when with the Force he carries us beyond.

4. For the abundance of his strength he carries his impeller beyond, a rein binds his neck and a rein holds him about the chest and a rein is in his mouth. Dadhikravan puts forth his energy according to the will in the mind and gallops along the turning of the path.

5. This is the swan that dwells in the purity, the lord of substance in the middle world, the priest of the offering whose seat is upon the altar, the guest in the gated house. He dwells in the Man, he dwells in the Truth, he dwells in the wide Ether; he is born of the Waters, he is born of the Light, he is born of the Law, he is born of the Hill of Substance he is the Law of the Truth.

- Sri Aurobindo

TOWARDS UNIFICATION*

THE progress of distance-bridging inventions, our modern facility for the multiplication of books and their copies and the increase of human curiosity are rapidly converting humanity into a single intellectual unit with a common fund of knowledge and ideas and a unified culture. The process is far from complete, but the broad lines of the plan laid down by the great Artificer of things already begin to appear. For a time this unification was applied to Europe only. Asia had its own triune civilisation, predominatingly spiritual, complex and meditative in India, predominatingly vital, emotional, active and simplistic in the regions of the Hindu Kush and Mesopotamia, predominatingly intellectual, mechanical and organised in the Mongolian empires. East, West and South had their widely separate spirit and traditions, but one basis of spirituality, common tendencies and such commerce of art, ideas and information as the difficulties of communication allowed, preserved the fundamental unity of Asia. East and West only met at their portals, in war of kings than in peace, and through that shock and contact influenced but did not mingle with each other. It was the discovery of Indian philosophy and poetry which broke down the barrier. For the first time Europe discovered something in the East which she could study not only with the curiosity which she gave to Semitic and Mongolian ideas and origins, but with sympathy and even with some feeling of identity. This metaphysics, these epics and dramas, this formulated jurisprudence and complex society had methods and a form which, in spite of their diversity from her own, yet presented strong points of contact; she could recognise them, to a certain extent, she thought she could understand. The speculativeness of the German, the lucidity of the Gaul, the imagination and aesthetic emotionalism of the British Celt found something to interest them, something even to assist. In the teachings of Buddha, the speculation of

* Old writing.

Shankara, the poetry of Kalidasa, their souls could find pasture and refreshment. The alien form and spirit of Japanese and Arabian poetry and of Chinese philosophy which prevented such an approximation with the rest of Asia was not here to interfere with the comprehension of the human soul and substance. There was indeed a single exception which was supplied by Japanese Art. The art of India contradicted European notions too vitally to be admitted into the European consciousness; its charm and power were concealed by the uncouthness to western eyes of its form and the strangeness of its motives. And it is only now, after the greatest living art critics in England had published sympathetic appreciations of Indian art and energetic propagandists like Havell had persevered in their labour, that the European vision is opening to the secret of Indian painting and sculpture. But Japanese Art, though un-European in motives and methods, yet presented to them a form and technique which they could understand. Japanese painting had already begun to make its way into Europe even before. The victories of Japan and its acceptance of much of the outward circumstances of European civilisation opened a broad door into Europe for all in Japan that Europe can receive without unease or the feeling of an incompatible strangeness. Japanese painting, Japanese dress, Japanese decoration are not only accepted as a part of Western life by the select few and the cultured classes but known and allowed, without being adopted by the millions. Asiatic civilisation has entered into Europe as definitely though not so victoriously as European civilisation into Asia. It is only the beginning, but so was it only the beginning when a few scholars alone rejoiced in the clarity of Buddhistic Nihilism, Schopenhauer rested his soul on the Upanishads and Emerson steeped himself in the Gita. None could have imagined then that a Hindu monk would make converts in London and Chicago or that a Vedantic temple would be built in San Francisco and Anglo-Saxon Islamites erect a Mussalman mosque in Liverpool. It appears from a recent inquiry that the only reading, omitting works of fiction, which commands wide general interest among public library readers is either scientific works or books replete with Asiatic mysticism. How significant is this fact when we remember that these are the two powers, Europe and Asia, the victorious intellect and the insurgent spirit which are rising at this moment to struggle for the mastery of the unified world! Nevertheless it is not the public library reader, the man in the streets of the literary world, but the increasing circles of men of culture and a various curiosity through which the Orient and

the Occident must first meet in a common humanity and the day dawn when some knowledge of the substance of Upanishads will be as necessary to an universal culture as a knowledge of the substance of the Bible, Shankara's theories or the speculations of thinkers and Kalidasa, Valmikie and Vyasa as near and common in the subject matter of the European critical intellect as Dante or Homer.

It is the difficulties of presentation that prevent a more rapid and complete commingling....

SRI AUROBINDO

THE TEACHING OF SRI AUROBINDO

EVERY thinking person asks himself, in his awakened moments, what is the meaning of this life? or, has it any meaning at all? What is this world? How has it come to be? Where is it drifting to? And what is man? Had he a past? Has he a future? What is the significance of his present?

Many have thought over these questions before and the answers they have given are varied and often contradictory. The universe, it is said, is a creation of an Almighty God who has brought all creatures into being by a fiat and rules over them with the scales of justice in his hands. He rewards good with happiness and punishes evil with misery. All continues till, one day, he is pleased to dissolve the empire.

There are others who pronounce there is no God. God is only a figment of the anthropomorphic imagination of man. The world is self-existent. All is a result of the action and reaction of elements and forces; each form comes into existence and passes out of it mechanically as a result of certain combinations and break-up of material elements. Consciousness is only an epiphenomenon of the physical organism. There is neither past nor future; only the present is real and it is wisdom to make the most of it.

No, this world is not real either, say still others. The world is a transient phenomenon where everything changes moment to moment, man a stream of thought-movements and a bundle of impressions: the whole concatenation is kept going by the never-ending urge of Desire. Once this prop is withdrawn the flux of things lapses and ceases to be. There is no abiding reality as such; the only thing that truly exists is a Nothing, Zero, Shunyam.

There is yet another view which has exercised a profound influence on the mind of man. According to it there is a Supreme Reality; but it is an Absolute Indefinable, One-without-a-second—the Brahman, which stands transcendent above all creation. That alone is real; all else is unreal. The universe is a huge shadow cast by the Being of Brahman or a fantasm

woven by Its own force of Being, Maya. Thus the world-phenomena, the creatures peopling it, are all shadow-figures flitting about on an illusory stage. The sooner each one sees this truth, or rather lack of truth in his life and withdraws from it to the Sole Truth Beyond, the better.

There are certain modified versions of this standpoint which lend a partial reality to the world and life, but all told, the utmost they concede is an inferior value to world-existence vis à vis a Truer Beyond. Less or more, there is always a sense of unreality, an impermanence overhanging this life. One has to recognise that it is an activity of an inferior if not a wholly unreal kind and it is best to effect one's release from this state of dissolvable turmoil and pass to a hereafter or Beyond which alone is ultimately True and Permanent.

To Sri Aurobindo, however, the world is not a delusion or a baseless transient phenomenon. All is real; you are real, I am real, every bit that we see around is as real as Reality could be. For all is a true formation of Brahman that is the Sole Reality:

> O Brahman, Thou art man and woman, boy and girl; old and worn thou walkest bent over a staff; thou art the blue bird and the green and the scarlet-eyed. (Svet.Up. IV.3,4)

II

This Teaching starts with the ancient perception of the seers of the Vedanta that there is a Supreme Reality which is absolute, eternal and indeterminable. This is Brahman, the One Truth, Sole and Entire. Whatever is is in Brahman, for there is none outside It. All this is a manifestation of Brahman, by Brahman, and in Brahman; therefore all is as real as Brahman Itself.

The Supreme Reality is indeed inconceivable and ineffable—an indefinable Transcendent. But It is not that alone. Above all and yet holding all in essence, when turned towards manifestation, this Reality determines itself as a supreme Existence, Something that exists by itself, *Sat*. Not merely exists, but it is actively aware of itself; dynamic with Self-Knowledge, it is Consciousness-Force, *Cit*. And the very nature of this Existence innate with Consciousness is an utter Delight, *Ananda*. This is the triune status, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, in which the Reality perceives itself in its poise for manifestation.

Why does Brahman manifest ? Why should the Absolute turn from its ineffable Immutability towards Movement and what is it that it seeks which is not already contained in itself ? Well, Brahman manifests himself not because of any want but for a Self-revelation, a Self-deployment in the outpouring of his Bliss. It is this Ananda of his Being that throws itself out for the sheer joy of an infinite movement and variation. Ananda is the base, Ananda the movement and Ananda the goal of manifestation. All creation is a surge of Brahman in an outflow of Delight. This is the full import of the Vedantic dictum, all is Brahman, *sarvam khalu idam brahma.*

So it is that the universe is a manifestation of Brahman, the Reality. And manifestation of Brahman means the revelation, the becoming of all that is native to, inherent in Brahman,—the Existence, the Consciousness, the Force and the Bliss that are the very terms of this Brahmanhood. In a word, Brahman the Absolute Being moves into Becoming in order to manifest his full plenitude of Self-Existence, Self-Knowledge, Self-Power and Self-Delight in an infinitude of expression.

That, says Sri Aurobindo, is the Purpose of Creation; the universe is meant to be a perfect revelation of Infinite Existence, Absolute Consciousness-Force and Illimitable Ananda of the Creative Godhead. That is the Purpose which secretly governs each and every form in creation; but it is given only to man to become conscious of it and exert himself to fulfil the Intention of the Creator.

III

The Reality of Sachchidananda does not precipitate itself directly into this terrestrial existence. The process of the manifestation is gradual. There comes about a graded self-unrolling of the creative Brahman through several layers or planes of Becoming, an ordered devolution step by step, each gradation less subtle and more dense, *ghana*, than the previous until this extension of material existence is arrived at. These are the seven planes, the *sapta padāni* of the Veda, or the seven habitations, stations, *sapta dhamāni* of the manifesting Godhead viz. the Planes of Sat, Chit, Ananda, Vijnana the Plane of Truth-Consciousness where the ten hundred steeds of the Effulgent Sun are massed together; the Planes of the Mind, Life and last Matter, the physical Earth, which is aptly described as the feet of the Cosmic Purusha, *padbhyām prthwi.*

It is to be noted that this descending Consciousness that is Brahman, extends itself in a separate formulation on each of these levels, organises existence on each plane around the particular principle so posited out of itself; and thus each of these gradations functions as the sovereign dynamis of its basic Principle of Consciousness active for the Divine Purpose. That is how the Planes of the Supreme Existence, Consciousness-Force, and Bliss, the Plane of Truth-Consciousness and the Plane of Mind (with the intermediate levels between the two), and the Life-Plane have been formed and set in action as Powers and fields for the Divine's self-expression of its Knowledge, Force and Infinitude in terms suited to their several orders of existence.

And here too on Earth, on this place of physical matter, the Creative Truth seeks to manifest itself. True, every factor, every condition of the organisation here is quite contrary to the characteristic expressions of the Reality in its own sway. The self-involution of the Reality has reached its acme in a total self-denial. The utmost infinitesimal finite is the unit, a veritable inconscience its nature and insentience a special feature of this order of creation in its primal beginnings. Perhaps that too is in the line with the Nisus. The Divine is to reveal the full glory of its Being in conditions which are the very opposite of its Supreme Nature.

And the method by which this Purpose is being carried out is what Sri Aurobindo calls the *Spiritual Evolution*— a progressive unfoldment and growth of the Spirit or Consciousness which is concealed in every form in Creation. This Consciousness whose devolution has culminated in a concretisation of itself in the solid core of Matter, is there imbedded or fossilised, as it were, and now seeks to release itself, to realise and establish itself in an ascending gradation working out appropriate vehicles for its embodiment and expression at every step. Thus from inanimate matter, there emerged gradually the throbs of life, the first vibrations of the evolving Consciousness; they were followed by less primitive and more and more developed forms of life in which Consciousness became more and more articulate. In the emergence of this life-form of Consciousness, it must be noted, a natural pressure from the Life-Plane pre-existent above so to say, played a capital part. With the growing organisation of the life-principle on earth a yet higher principle of Consciousness, namely the awakened and self-aware power of Consciousness which is called Mind made its gradual appearance; as in the case of Life, so here too Nature has been helped in her transition by the action of the Plane of Mind pre-existent above.

With the advent of this mental principle, the process of the spiritual evolution has arrived at a turning point. For till then, evolution had proceeded more or less mechanically, without any awareness or responsive cooperation by the evolving units like the plant or animal. Now Nature has found an ally. The inception and growth of this active faculty of self-awareness has brought into operation a new factor. In Man, the evolving being has become conscious of itself, conscious of its power, and conscious too of its need and possibility of self-enlargement and self-exceeding. For evidently this power of Intelligence which has been developed and established so far, has limitations which are too patent; it cannot be the final organ which the Supreme Consciousness has evolved for its perfect expression.

The Mind as it is developed is at best a half-way house. The very tortuous and tentative ways of its operation, the obvious imperfections and lacunae that characterise the world-order under its governance, are enough to convict it of inadequacy to serve as the pristine Power for the direct manifestation of the Sachchidananda on Earth. There is, Sri Aurobindo declares, a yet another Power for that task, a still higher Principle high above the highest evolved human mind —what we may call the Super-Mind, the Plane pre-existent at the head of this creation. It is the original Truth-Consciousness in direct possession of the Truth of each form and of the Power to effectuate it, the Vijnana of the Upanishad. It is this principle of Self-aware Knowledge and Self-active Power that is to be attained above, evoked within and established in the aspiring Consciousness of Earth-nature and it is this consummation towards which the present endeavour of human evolutionary effort is converging, consciously and half-consciously.

It is only when this Higher Power, the Supra-mental Consciousness of the Creative Truth is reached and realised, takes its place at the head of Evolution and functions as its governing Principle that the character of this world of half-light and half-power will begin to change and the full revelation of the veiled Godhead commence.

To strive and actualise this possibility is the Call to Man. As the highest developed being on the crest of evolving Nature, he can take into himself her labouring movement, give it a conscious direction and with his effective collaboration accelerate and telescope the Process to its destined end.

This is the aim and this the content of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

(*To continue*) M. P. PANDIT

SRI AUROBINDO*

I AM very grateful for the opportunity that has been given to me to speak this evening on the eve of the celebration of the Jayanti of Sri Aurobindo....

As for the important questions raised, I can say that I have been very sincerely trying to follow a different line of thought which my country has given to me through tradition. I must confess, that I am fundamentally convinced of certain truths of one system of philosophy of which I am aware. It is also a matter for confession that I understood my Ramanuja much better through Sri Aurobindo than I was able to do through others. He it was that made me enter into the *sādhana* of the whole thing. Whilst I am very clear as to what is *tattva, hita* and *puruṣārtl.a* and that in India we are not interested in what is called *kāma* and *artha* and whilst we have throughout guided ourselves to the one single goal which any man ought to seek and will seek inevitably, that is freedom, I feel that this freedom requires a series of delineations. I consider that Sri Aurobindo has provided a fundamentally integral knowledge of the *hithas* and *puruṣārthas.* About his *tattva,* I think he has not deviated from the most ancient statement: "Ekam Sat, viprah bahudha vadanti—Sarvam khalvidam Brahma". He has not played a different tune, nor are we prepared to play a different tune. That is the most important fact we have to recognise. Whether you call God or the Ekam, 'Brahman' or Eswara or by whatever name He is known or by whatever personality He dominates the world, I can say that it is not at all in contradiction to this original statement of "Ekam Sat, viprah bahudha vadanti—Sarvam khalvidam Brahma".

We have had evolution, may be historically conditioned. We have worshipped Sri Vishnu at one time, Shiva at another time and Brahma at yet another time. We may also be worshipping lesser

* From an Address delivered at the Jayanti celebrations in August 1956 under the auspices of Sri Aurobindo Study Circle, Madras.

ones that is, the sons of these or personalities of the One. But I need not take you to mythology. Mythologies grow in the consciousness of the people, and have value for a particular people. A truth might have to be emphasised for the particular purpose of divine action, but that certainly does not mean that you ought not to search for Him and that you are merely to accept what is called a custom in the matter. It is necessary for us to know the whole Brahman, if it is possible. That it is impossible, some have told us. I am not grudging them that truth. But I am saying that I want to know the whole. Nobody can tell me that I should not aspire to know the whole. I hold that the Gita is a fundamental scripture. It is, and it is claimed by everybody who has some reverence for Sri Krishna that it is a Upanishad. It is a distilled essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Please note that it is not something that contradicts any portion of the Vedas. It is something that is the essence of the Vedas, the Brahmanas, Mantras and Upanishads put together. There are many people who pay lip homage to Brahmanas. I feel that the mantras are interpreted in the Brahmanas. The meanings of the mantras cannot be understood apart from the Brahmanas in which they are used. I am not making a very wild statement, but I will rather trust in the genius of the ancients who have put them together as one scripture. Again, I must say, to Sri Aurobindo's credit that he brought us back to this recognition.

Nobody else has drawn attention to the great volume of Brahmana literature, which is slighted by the Westerners as meaningless rituals and so on. Sri Aurobindo said that there is another cue offered in the matter. That cue is that yoga is not to be understood in the naturalist way, but in the *ādhyātmika* way. Even for that suggestion we should be grateful. We are provided with an apparatus of mind to see that particular literature with a different vision and hope. To-day, if there is something which we hold as fundamentally capable of providing us a clear knowledge of the hereafter, the Brahmanas provide it. Take away the Brahmanas. There is no after-life to be explained hereafter. Even the Upanishads cannot grant you knowledge of after-life. It can grant you freedom and that freedom may be meaningless. So far as that point is concerned, I feel that Sri Aurobindo has given us a lead, if not a fuller explanation. I do not say that he has reconciled, or that he has supplanted this in order to implant himself in that place. Not at all. He has provided a modern apparatus for thinking afresh on our old philosophy.

Secondly, we are accustomed to value our Gita. Sri Aurobindo holds

that the Gita is a Gita of liberation. He agrees with our ancestors that the Gita is the Moksha Sastra, not at all intended for the lonely purpose of having an action done and somehow done. That is one way of looking at it. If it is a Moksha Sastra, what is the moksha we are seeking ? The greatness of Gita would depend upon its richness of contribution towards general liberation, starting with a little liberation from my doubt as to the conflict between custom and my duty, or a higher or new morality introduced into this world—the morality of *Ahimsā*, the morality of social welfare or social life, or preservation of social *dharma* and individual *dharma*. I believe that here again the problem, if it is faced as a mental being, will not be very simple.

You all know that the *Essays on the Gita* were written by Sri Aurobindo at a time when Sri Bal Gangadhar Tilak was projecting his work. In the earliest number of "Arya" Sri Aurobindo made the statement: "I hear that Sri Bal Gangadhar Tilak is going to bring out *Gita Rahasya*. I am sure it is going to be very valuable, but I am also told that he holds that the Gita gives you Karma Yoga and I believe it is not the complete truth". So, he projected his own Essays on the Gita and it was written under such conditions. He held, even as some of the ancients of India have held, that Karma Yoga may be the beginning. It is necessary, but it is not the whole meaning. Even the capacity for you to perform Karma properly will not arise unless you have got the Jnana. In fact Jnana may grow by action, by performing the ritual actions. Even the performance of ritual actions will certainly lead you to Jnana, but that would not be enough, for that Jnana would only be building up itself for a greater and fuller absorption in the Divine, the enjoyment of the Divine—that is Bhakti. Jnana will transform itself into Bhakti and you will find that your works will transform themselves into devotional duties. Everything then would become just subsidiaries to Bhakti. Bhakti is the culmination. Now, the modern interpreters of the Gita would be satisfied with this interpretation. I should feel that most of us are satisfied with this type of integration of our human faculties or modes of consciousness. Mentally you can assimilate a wee bit of this and a wee bit of that, but the main contradiction between the conative, cognitive and affective levels of our Being would remain. A solution would not have come and therefore, a *sādhana* is inculcated in the whole process. Yoga is a means of *sādhana*. Yagna is a means of *sādhana*. Yagna and Yoga have all the same purpose, that is the transformation of one's relationship between oneself, the world and the

gods. Karma Yoga will bring a relation between the higher worlds and one's world. Yagna is for the realisation of a particular dynamic inter-dependence of the higher and the lower worlds. As for Yaga, this may also be taken as above. But what is Yoga ? Yoga is a particular relationship which one establishes between oneself and God through knowledge. This relationship can be three-fold. It can be done through works; but it would not be done if you do only works. It is necessary to find that the Divine is within yourself and yourself is the seat of the Divine action and if you do not know that it is the Seer, the guiding *Niyantā* within you, that is the Eswara, there is no possibility of getting into real Jnana Yoga. You must identify your true self with Brahman, but that identification can happen through works or devotion or affection. But mere *Tattva Jñāna* even is meaningless. It cannot stand on its own stem. It has no roots. It must manifest itself in the action which is considered to be what we call *kainkārya*—devotional service or what we call devotion. Devotion, according to His Will is a particular methodology of approach. It is not everything that becomes Bhakti. There are two types of Bhakti. There is a particular methodology called Ashtanga Yoga in Bhakti. This is an important part of devotion for it fixes one's mind on God in surrender and submission. Bhakti would demand Ashtanga Yoga. Some ask the question "Can you love God really ? Does every part of your being respond to the love of God ? Is your nail loving God ?" That is an important question. Nobody can love truly unless God grants one such love through His Grace. To love truly means that one cannot live without Love of God. By Love of God should one live or hold on to life. Some of the great men have withstood the test. That is why their lives, even through the shadow of time, shine. The modern interpreter of Gita is more satisfied with saying that the three Yogas have correspondence with the three attitudes or the modes of consciousness of man. I consider that the Gita goes a little deeper. It is to this point that Sri Aurobindo leads us. I do see that one important Yoga to which Sri Vaishnavism has referred is Bhara Samparpana Yoga or Nyasa Yoga. This is a unique feature of Gita. Says our Lord "*Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaranam vraja; aham tvām sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiśyāmi, mā śucah*" —"If you cannot do all these three yogas and even if you are lingering over, surrender all of them and take me alone as your sole Refuge. Surrender unto me and I shall take you through the whole yoga." *Yogakṣemam vahāmyaham*. Here *Kṣema* is freedom; and *Yoga* is again to eternally abide with one's God, in all parts. This

Mantra, has been expounded with extraordinary lucidity by the Sri Vaishnava Acharyas—I should say, reverence—by the commentators of Gita. This particular verse has a broader deliberate meaning in Sri Aurobindo. Just as it has a meaning for the immediate solution of one's problems or even the higher solutions of problems in Visishtadvaita, one does not have anything that goes beyond to the higher evolution of man. For example you may find that you are not capable of achieving yourself, either because of your birth or because of your status or because of your condition or because of the debacle that comes to man at any time. You may find that you are helpless on occasions. You may ask, "To whom shall I go ? Who shall be the person who will save me ?" It may be that I am against God also. Such a moment occurs even to an atheist. Well then, the Lord says "Even if Ravana came to me for refuge I shall save him". God says "Surrender unto me and then see how I save you. It may not be according to your terms that I am going to save you, but it will be according to my terms. Save you, I shall." This faith in God's words you should develop. If you can do that, it is all right. I consider that the Alwars have stated this position of the omnipotence of God's Grace very firmly. Sri Ramanuja has stated it also very firmly. They have stated that surrender is a fundamental thing and that will lead us further to the ultimate state of living in God. Do not have any doubts about God's Grace. Your capacity for reasoning into God's nature or your capacity to perform Yajnas which are very costly according to some people, but which are very simple and not at all costly according to others is very slight. But we do not, nowadays, have even teachers to tell us how to perform them. For example, we all are aware that we are not able to do Karma Yoga. Nor able to follow Jnana Yoga. Most of us do not know how to do Ashtaanga Yoga and follow Panchakala Vidhi. The Gita says "I am the path. I am the *Upāya;* I am your Purushartha; In me you shall find your freedom." As to what that freedom is and what the content of that freedom is, at that point, the Gita stops. The Gita tells one to surrender unto Him. Of course Sri Krishna preaches earlier "Become of my mind, do my actions, think of me, surrender unto me and I shall do everything." Here the full instruction is given. If a man is solely devoted to God and surrenders to Him, he has done all that has to be done (*kṛtakṛtya*). If he does it, and does it consistently through *abyāsa*, that is, pursues it, holding on to the feet of the Lord without that vice of mankind, namely *asūyā*, envy and greed, he will achieve the goal, namely God Realisation which is Moksha. That is how the whole thing has been

so brilliantly summarised in the last chapter of the message of Gita.

But here Sri Aurobindo was not quite happy at that particular point of conclusion. Where the Gita has left the Yoga, he starts. It is not the final conclusion of the Yoga. He starts the beginning of spiritual life or describes God's Yoga as leading to Divine Evolution. He says "You must find the Lord acting through you in every one of your limbs and in everyone of your parts and see the transformation of mind and body." The surrender of each part is necessary. You may say it is a very difficult process. You may say, "How can I surrender ?" The answer is "Do not worry. Be surrendering to God. Only keep yourself fit for God. Do not obstruct God's activity." I consider this is a very great revolution of the concept of Yoga which Sri Krishna has given to us. It is to the merit of Sri Aurobindo, I should say, that he seized upon this particular point and utilised it to its fullest, for the sake of divinisation of man. I do not say it was not anticipated.

Then, there is the problem of getting rid of the ego. In this divine Yoga, your ego would have ceased to exist without any effort on your part. It is such a difficult thing nowadays for people to get rid of their ego. Ego is the obstructor. I cannot get rid of it, for, every effort to get rid of it makes it more powerful. I simply cannot liquidate my ego by own efforts. When I become humble, I claim I am the *most* humble. When I become a servant of the people, I am tempted to claim that I am *the humblest* servant of the people and I develop a peculiar *sattwic* conceit, and that can be terrible. No one knew about this fact better than the Seer of the Isha-Upanishad himself. There is this problem of getting rid of the egoness without getting rid of it actually. You cannot abolish the ego. It must be made the vehicle of the Divine, That is the only way of liquidating the ego. You must become only an instrument of the Divine. There is no other alternative. Try every other method, even by devotion. It is action, divine *kainkarya*, that can liquidate egoness. It must be practised in the context of divine life with our understanding of society and man, the world and the society etc.

I hold that Sri Aurobindo is the most orthodox of modern thinkers, if only people could understand him. That is why I hold on fundamentally to the view the East is different from the West, because our value concepts are different and these are Orient and belong to the East, whereas the value concepts of the West are money and mammon, power and pelf and human comfort and pleasure. They are what we call our enemies—Kama and Artha, but that does not mean that

in God's world they are not there, used through the divine attitude for the Divine. What is the purpose of God ? You may ask that question. Am I the person to say that God must do this and do that ? The Sastras do say that all the four Purusharthas should be desired, but under restraint and regulation. Sovereignty, power and pelf for whom should we have, for whom should we exercise, through whom should we exercise and who should exercise ? These are the three factors that have to be remembered. You start the work. The question is for whom, by whom and who ? If you abolish yourself and if all are for God, by God and God's work, one can go to the forests with as much ease as one could walk into a palace; and he becomes verily a sage. It must be said that only when the human consciousness is changed, then only his present standards of action can get changed. Unless one has peace that is of God, he can hardly be fit for change. One must think of that particular aspect that peace comes only through the Divine.

It is asked "How does evolution really proceed at that point ? Is material transformation possible ? Should we think of a better fitted man for the enjoyment of Divine existence other than the present human being ? Is the body, which the superman gets, different from ours ? Should it be different from ours or should we get some experience beyond this body?" All these are definite questions. Is evolution possible beyond this particular human being in this world ? I am not here, of course, standing as a Zoologist or anyone of those who are speculating as to the past and future of man. I leave it to those people who think that matter moves the mind. I wish they accept it. But for me and for those who think like me—who are a very small band of people—I hold that mind rules matter and it has been ruling matter so far. Now, I want the Divine mind to rule this matter. That is all the difference. The Gita has stated it in so many words. I have not even extended its meaning. It is there. But the problem that is posed is this : Is a general evolution of all possible, which is not in consonance with Darwinian Theory of Evolution ? The concept of Sarvamukti, general higher evolution, bristles with difficulties. That is, firstly an individual must change himself and then others could follow the course of Evolution. I consider that the individual must change himself first. The nucleus of a new higher Evolution is dependent on the human individual's individual evolution spiritually. For this one must know one's real nature. *Svadharma* understood in the highest sense. Is it not then clear that each man must follow his svadharma ? Everybody who reads the

Gita thinks that he is an Arjuna. But fighting is not the duty of everybody in the world; certainly not the duty of philosophers. That is not their *dharma*, at any rate. One has to know one's *svadharma* and act accordingly. Sri Krishna himself says : "If you refuse to fight now, you will fight later. Your Svabhava will make you do it." That is very important. So if I want to-day to fight, I don't know whether I may not run away from the fight as soon as it starts. That is why I say any nation, which does not give to their people, the freedom for Svadharma and Svabhava, will not prosper. Therefore, I hold that Sri Krishna was right in asking Arjuna to fight. Do not say that Gita is only telling me this and I am only to fight. Even if a nuclear bomb comes here, I am not going to fight. I may not fight. There may be no need to fight. What I am saying is that one has to find out the Divine in oneself and that is a path that leads to good conduct and this is unique in Hinduism. Sri Aurobindo emphasises this aspect that Divine multiplicity is something which you must revere as a unique universal fact. The individual is the universal; the universal is the individual, provided at this point you make yourself a perfect instrument, delegate or part of the supreme consciousness or God.

Now, as for the transformation, Sri Aurobindo says we have gone so far up to this point in Natural Evolution. The truth of Natural Evolution should be sought in Spiritual Evolution that is underway. We find that, that with all our religions for the past 5,000 years, nobody seems able to transform or bring God into Earth. Some say that the best that a man can afford to do in this world is to get himself liquidated for ever, having no rebirth. That may be a very easy solution. We cannot have a future here. Why should we have a future here, when there are other worlds which are much better ? Surely, I admit that. I do not like to leave my country. We are a people who are having what we may call a "land-love". Why should I go away ? Can I not make my house, which is dusty and stupid, much better ? Well, let me ask that question. So also, I ask of the human being "Can he not be changed for the better ?" God has given me some transcendent desires which the *artharthis* (material mindedness) cannot fulfil. It is here that Sri Aurobindo's emphatic assertion that there is a way and manner, the very Gita way and the Gita manner, comes in. God descends to lift up, rescue and transform the human world into Divine World—or a world that reveals the Eternal Divine Laws. This is possible because the Divine is all love and love is the only thing that descends or condescends to transform the human process of Evolution. God's love for man is some-

thing very different from man's love for God. With the best of intentions man asks something of God. Even if he says "I do not want anything from you", he lurkingly wishes something to be given in return for his offerings, for his prayers or surrender. It may be just ecstasy that he craves. Therefore, I consider that true Bhakti seeks of *Bhoga* of the Divine Form. It is an enjoyment of God through Yajna and Yoga. The three yogas in the light of God's yoga become the divinised Yogas of Love (Bhoga), Yoga and Yajna. Thus the defects of commission and omission in Karma, Jnana and Bhakti Yogas can be transcended. For when you surrender your love not for the fulfilment of your limited personality, but by the entire offering of it to God for His fulfilment, what happens to you ? There, God reveals his love to you by giving Himself to you. He takes up his residence in you consciously and moulds it and changes you wholly. He wants to see whether by giving all the ecstasies of Bhoga, Yoga and Yaga He can make you feel yourself with Him. The order of the Yogas gets reversed, if I may say so, and all knowledge and works proceed on the basis of Love or full enjoyment of God's Nature. You see that the Divine action is from top to bottom and not from bottom to top. This is what we mean by descent (*avatarana*) which transforms the individual and leads to his ascent or evolution. He must act in you. What is the vehicle of His action ? What is the particular structure that He creates within you, that structure which will act through you ? In earlier evolution, upto man, the human finite rational mind with all its logical dialectical patterns and characteristics was created by God through which knowledge flowed to man of higher things. Now, Sri Aurobindo says, the Divine has got His own Divine Mind through which He acts. That is what I call, the apprehension by man of a particular structure which acts universally in all men. On the other hand, you want some clarity on the operations of the super-mind, through even your mind, or your ego which the supermind has begun to use. In the case of the human mind or manas, it is a delegate of the ignorant ego. It is doing the functions of the finite ego. This position is altered. The supermind becomes the ruler and your finite ego becomes the ruled. A new function is taken over by the ego. It becomes the instrument of the Universal Supermind of God. That is why I say, the Supreme Mind is the mind of God, acting through me. Why I should say, the mind of God ? For, we cannot extricate a structure from a function and a structure—a particular shape or pattern or logic of the infinite is necessary for functioning as Infinite or instrument of the Infinite. This is the rationale for postulating

the actual existence of the Supermind. Another question has been raised. Whether this Supermind will be inherited as in the case of the human mind in a biological sense ? I emphasise the Divine is much bigger than any mind,—even the Divine Mind, because Divine is Divine and Infinite and it is merely something projecting in a universal way which will act as a common Mind for every soul which has offered itself to Him. It is not, I think, perfectly correct to say that when we speak of an inheritance of biological characteristics, there is no inheritance of acquired characteristics of spiritual life also. I will only say that we are unable to say about spiritual things, because it depends upon conscious acceptance of the Divine in one's life by each. Samskaras in Hindu Religion played this role for mind and for the birth of the Divine Mind in us. Our Western friends are yet to tell me about how mind is getting inherited at all in the human species, because they are under the grip of a new famine, the famine of spirituality, being essentially materialistic in their approach. That is why I hold they are not the persons to explain to me what my spiritual situation is, what the human situation is and so on, because I find that on every point they are wrongly approaching the problem. The lower law cannot explain the higher phenomenon. Consciousness cannot be explained by Unconsciousness.

A point was raised with regard to the rationality of the concept of *Avatār*. It has been said that the order of the ten Avatars shows ancient's knowledge of the evolutionary process. Here again, we should not accept that it is merely Natural Evolution. Even Prof. Haldane has not given his full credence to this. Well, I do not think Sri Aurobindo himself depended upon this explanation very much. The real argument hinges on the transformation of the man made by the Descent of God in a plane of being so as to bring about the evolution of a mental structure, appropriate for a higher kind of life, not by the individual and not through a resistance or reception to the environment or as a response to the challenges of new situations. The Divine has provided earlier the type of mind which creates its structure for each level of Evolution. To-day we have the Divine providing the Supermind which creates its functional structure for a higher humanity. It must be inheritable by future Humanity through such integration as have achieved with It. There is a need for a consciousness that can accept a profounder concept of Spiritual Evolution which is an extension of the Natural Evolution, in a sense, even modifying our views of it.

Sri Aurobindo's main thesis is very similar to that of theosophy on certain lines. There is no contradiction so far as the main points

are concerned. I have only to say that the formation of what is called the Supermind, which is very different from what Mr. Fitche or Nietzsche or any other person from the West thought about it, is a Structure with its own unique functions and laws. This may be called the Mother also or Mother-Consciousness. There is appropriateness in it. The appropriateness lies in this, that just as the human race was mothered by the mind—*manas* and has become the *mānava*, so also the Supermind is the womb of those willing loving minds which will be transformed and be made divine. Our Mind has to be born anew of it. This is a very important point, because many people who think that evolution is coming from below do not know that Sri Aurobindo emphasised that the Avatar concept, even by the formation of the higher levels of consciousness, is much more important and in fact the precursor of the ascent of the lower. The Higher attracts the lower to Itself, even as if something magnetic is placed above, the lower jumps to it. I consider that seventy five years ago this has been already postulated by the great masters of the Theosophical Society and later on continued with such profound luminosity and conviction of the traditional style of Sri Aurobindo. I hold the view that the theosophical view was open to the question that it was non-traditional and unorthodox in the Hindu Sense; but even that particular charge cannot be levelled against Sri Aurobindo. For, however much, he may differ from Sayana (and Sri Ramanuja differed from Sankara and Madhva still more from Sankara—that did not make them alien to orthodoxy), Sri Aurobindo has been loyal to the Ancient Prasthanas of Vedanta. It was as much our part of the tradition and Sri Aurobindo has given us a renewed tradition. For the confirmation of his Spiritual Truths Sri Aurobindo went to the Vedas, Upanishads, the Gita and above all he went to the *Agamas*, namely the *Tantras* and in one of his biographical incidents it is narrated that he taught some of his disciples the Bhagavatsastra Pancharatra. Sri Aurobindo taught us to actually see that the Divine descends in each one of us and actually acts within us. Regarding Sarva Mukti, that it is what all will evolve to have, he was speaking in a sensible way. He was quite certain that if a few people will take to this new *sadhana*, this evolution will lead to the general spiritual evolution. All evolution, including natural evolution started with a change or mutation in some individual or individuals and later was by a process of inheritance biologically proliferated and become general. Thus a few individuals will form the nucleus of a Race, a New Race. The Divine Humanity will mean Heaven on Earth—Infinite Consciousness—Bliss here by the transforma-

tion of the Earth or finite consciousness and Ignorance. Here, there can be Heaven. Our Great Acharyas have spoken that where God is, there is their Vaikunta. They did not want to go to the other world. This truth Sri Aurobindo has reaffirmed with great beauty and power. Therefore, I salute the Great Teacher who has given me, in my own life, some aspiration to realise what the great teachers of the past have told us and has added just that little force, may be a mighty force, by which my life may be completely transformed and made Divine. I only hope and pray that it will be Hunamity's good fortune too. Earn the measure of that great man's blessings for humanity, by which he brought the Supermind into himself and has striven to have his Yoga spread to all so that he who goes for it and who is fit, can accept it and grow in it into the Divine Nature in all his parts.

K. C. VARADACHARI

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

V

Surrender

THERE are many among the moderns who cannot understand what self-surrender is. They seem to understand well enough what aspiration or sincerity means, though not, of course, in all their deeper implications; but surrender completely passes their comprehension. What to surrender, and how to surrender? There are also many, probably more in the West than in the East, who, even though they know what surrender is, refuse to make it. Their whole being revolts against the very conception of it. "They have been taught to fear and avoid all that threatens their personal independence. They have imbibed with their mother's milk the sense of individuality. And surrender means giving up all that."[1] To give up all one calls oneself, to renounce one's very individuality, to cast to the winds one's cherished ideas and convictions—well, it is, indeed, too steep a demand, they protest, to make upon man! And who would profit by this surrender? If the personality I call myself is offered up as a sacrifice, what remains of me? Will not surrender involve me in a fresh bondage, me who am so athirst for freedom?

This fear of self-deprivation or bondage springs from a wrong notion of surrender. Evidently, one of the most basic teachings of the Christ has hardly been clearly grasped, much less practised by the people of the West. To lose oneself in order to gain one's soul, to die to one's old self in order to be reborn in God, is the cream of the teachings of the Christ; and yet, strangely enough, it is this that has been slurred over or ignored, and the moral acts and precepts which are distantly derived from it are represented as the kernel of the Christian gospel. The new birth that the Christ spoke of so repeatedly in so many contexts has had no appeal to the general religious mind of Christendom. But there have been many mystics in the West

[1] The Words of the Mother

who have practised self-surrender and gained thereby the unitive experience or the beatific vision of God. The impulse to total surrender came to Suso at the most crucial, the most agonised moment of his life when, "wounded to the marrow" and half-demented, he cried out to God: "Fiat voluntas tua". And that at once put an end to all his anguish. In his "Book of Truth", repudiating the pernicious superstition and dispelling the fear that self-surrender is an annihilation of personality, he writes: " 'Lord, tell me', says the Servitor, 'what remains to a blessed soul which has wholly renounced itself.' Truth says, 'When the good and faithful servant enters into the joy of his Lord...he forgets himself, he is no longer conscious of his selfhood; he disappears and loses himself in God, and becomes one spirit with Him, as a drop of water which is drowned in a great quantity of wine. For even as such a drop disappears, taking the colour and the taste of wine, so it is with those who are in full possession of blessedness. All human desires are taken from them in an indescribable manner, they are rapt from themselves, and are immersed in the Divine Will." Ruysbroeck strikes the same note when he says of the blessed souls: "Because they have abandoned themselves to God in doing, in leaving undone, and in suffering, they have steadfast peace and inward joy, consolation and savour, of which the world cannot partake...."

But it is not easy to achieve anything like perfection in self-surrender. Indeed, even among the resolute followers of the spiritual path, there are not many who can bear, without flinching, to see the old Adam in them die, writhing and wriggling, day by day, inch by inch, so that the God in them may arise and manifest Himself in their life and nature. And it is this inability to surrender that is at the root of many a shipwreck and frustration in spiritual life.

The Integral Yoga, says the Mother, cannot be practised at all without at least some amount of surrender to start with. There must be, as a constant inspiration behind surrender, the faith or perception that the Divine is the one, omnipresent Reality, the Soul of our souls, and the Maker and Master of the whole universe; and that to surrender to Him all ourself and all we have, in all the ways of our being, sarvabhavena, is the only way to be united with Him and attain the divine perfection we aim at in Yoga".[1] It is absurd to aspire for union with the Divine and at

[1] "Attainment comes only by means of this sincere, spontaneous and entire surrender of yourself and all things." Dionysius the Areopagite

the same time to cling on to one's ego which keeps up the sense of separateness. The ego is "the lynch-pin of the wheel of ignorance," and it is the complete surrender of the ego with all that it connotes and constitutes that is the inner sense of surrender. But that is only the primary sense and preliminary movement of surrender about which the Mother says :

"Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. Without this decision nothing is at all possible ; if you do not surrender, the Yoga is entirely out of the question. Everything comes naturally after it, for the whole process starts with surrender. You can surrender either through knowledge or through devotion. You may have a strong intuition that the Divine alone is the Truth and a luminous conviction that without the Divine you cannot manage. Or you may have a spontaneous feeling that this line is the only way of being happy, a strong psychic desire to belong exclusively to the Divine : 'I do not belong to myself,' you say, and give up the responsibility of your being to the Truth."—*The Words of the Mother*, 3rd Series.

When the decision has been taken and the will strung to its achievement, surrender has to be carried out in every thought, every feeling, every sensation and every act, from moment to moment, and from stage to stage. Particularly, surrender has to become the living law of self-giving of even the physical being and the physical body. Besides, the object of surrender is not only "self-naughting" for the purpose of an ecstatic union and communion with the Divine in the depths of our being, but a holding up of the whole being, part by part, element by element, cell by cell, to the transforming Light-Force of the Supermind. It is here, in the fullness and integrality of its process, and its high objective of the radical transformation of the whole nature that surrender, as taught by the Mother, takes precedence of all traditional forms of it and reveals depths and ranges unexplored before. The Mother has made an elaborate art and technique of surrender, a steady and sincere pursuit of which cannot fail to lead to the great goal of the Integral Yoga.

Surrender and Offering

Surrender and offering are not quite the same thing, says the Mother ; they are two aspects of the same thing. "They do not belong altogether to the same level of consciousness. For example, you have resolved to

make an offering of your life to the Divine. All on a sudden there happens a very unpleasant thing : you did not expect it. Your first movement is to react and protest. And yet you have made the offering ; but something in you turns. If you are, however, consistent in your offering, you will hold the protesting part in your hands and put it before the Divine and say, 'Let Thy Will be done." In surrender, on the other hand, there is a natural, spontaneous, unprotesting adhesion. Even if there happens something unpleasant or contrary to your expectations, you are equally unperturbed and tranquil."[1]

Surrender and Self-Unification

Apart from the fear of losing all that we know and cherish as ourself, which inspires our reluctance to surrender, there is an initial, inescapable difficulty encountered in the very act of surrender : it is the normal disorder and conflict among the parts of our being. We are not masters of ourselves, we do not possess our being and nature. Before surrender we must possess—we cannot surrender what does not belong to us. Therefore, the very first thing to do is to reconcile the conflicting parts of our being and weld them into a harmonious unity. "In the course of your self-offering, you start unifying your being around what has taken the first decision—the central psychic will. All the jarring elements of your nature have to be harmonised, they have to be taken up one after another and unified with the central being. You may offer yourself to the Divine with a spontaneous movement, but it is not possible to give yourself effectively without this unification. The more you are united, the more you are able to realise self-giving."[2]

Surrender and Consecration

Consecration is the progressive perfection of self-surrender, the seal, as it were, of the Divine's acceptance of your self-giving. "Once the self-giving is complete, consecration follows : it is the crown of the whole process of realisation, the last step of the gradation, after which there is no more trouble and everything runs smoothly."[3] But it takes long to consecrate the whole being. The work of self-unification and surrender

[1] The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo part VII by Nolini Kanta Gupta
[2] & [3] Words of the Mother—3rd series

must proceed hand-in-hand till nothing is left unsurrendered. "Patiently you have to go round your whole being, exploring each nook and corner, facing all those anarchic elements in you which are waiting for their psychological moment to come up. And it is only when you have made the entire round of your mental, vital and physical nature, persuaded everything to give itself to the Divine and thus achieved an absolute unified consecration that you put an end to your difficulties."[1] Absolute self-consecration can be effected with much less difficulty if, from the beginning, there is an exclusive opening to the Grace of the Divine which, in its omniscience, knows how best to deal with the perverse or mutinous elements of our nature, forge them into a unity, and inflame them with the passion of an utter self-giving.

Surrender and Sacrifice

The fear of the individualist that surrender would mean sacrifice, a steady suicide, is unfounded and absurd. Like all fears, it is born of ignorance, ignorance of the real self of man and his infinite and imperishable individuality as distinguished from his finite, fugitive and constructed personality. In the Integral Yoga there is no room for sacrifice or immolation of the individual. Surrender liberates the individual from the toils of ignorance and falsehood, from his deluded self-identification with a transient form of his into the vastness of his immortal being in the Divine. Nothing of his nature parts is sacrificed or immolated, but everything is given over to the Divine, to whom it essentially belongs, for a perfect, creative development and fulfilment. The end of sacrifice is annihilation, but the end of surrender is a harmonious, dynamic perfection and fulfilment in the Divine.

"...In the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation. It is your possibilities that you sacrifice, the possibilities and realisations of your personality from the most material to the highest spiritual range. Sacrifice diminishes your being. If, physically, you sacrifice your life, your body, you give up all your possibilities on the material plane; you have done with the achievements of your earthly existence. There is always

in this idea of self-immolation a sense of forcing, a constriction, an imposed self-denial. This is an ideal that does not give room for the soul's deeper and larger spontaneities."[1]

But surrender is just the opposite ideal and movement. It is not coercion and immolation, no holocaust of the nature parts for the realisation of the naked soul, no enforced self-denial for the attainment of any national, humanitarian or altruistic ideal, but "a spontaneous self-giving, a giving of all your self to the Divine, to a greater Consciousness of which you are a part. Surrender will not diminish but increase you; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it. Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even the feeling that you are giving. When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way. True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and quantity, which you could not have had by yourself. This new greater measure of quality and quantity is different from anything you could attain before: you enter into another world, into a wideness which you could not have entered if you did not surrender."[2]

Some kind of surrender is, of course, implicit in all forms of spiritual discipline. For, the moment an individual aspires for the Infinite and Eternal, he has perforce to give up or whittle down his preoccupation with the finite and the temporal. He has to subdue his desires, chastise his passions, relinquish his selfish interests and try to get beyond his egoistic consciousness. This also is surrender. But it usually takes the form of sacrifice, and not unoften employs coercion and repression as its means. The finite personality is sought to be extinguished in order that the soul may merge in the Impersonal. This is not what the Mother calls surrender, as we have already seen. It leads to no fulfilment in life—it is only a surrender of the naked soul to the Infinite. It is based on the presupposition that life is an evil dream or a vicious circle of karma which one must get out of at any cost and by any means available. The Mother, on the contrary,

[1&2] Words of the Mother

looks upon life, material life, as real; as a field for the progressive incorporation and manifestation of the Divine on earth. Her conception of surrender is that man, being an indivisible portion of the infinite One, must not remain imprisoned in his separative ego, nor seek self-extinction in the ineffable Beyond, but must strive for and attain a living, dynamic union with the infinite Being and fulfil Him in his life; for that, indeed, will be his own perfect fulfilment. And for this fulfilment, not partial but integral, at once essential and expressional, a total surrender of the whole being with all its parts and elements is an indispensable prerequisite.

Detailed Surrender

The total surrender cannot be made all at once. Part after part, element after element, has to be surrendered with love and devotion from hour to hour, from day to day, from year to year, till all is weaned from the ego and dedicated to the Divine. A general surrender made once for all is not enough. Not a single element must be left in the being, in the nature, in life and its energies, even in the body, that is still wedded to the ego and under the influence of the forces of ignorance. The Integral Yoga demands an uncompromising and exhaustive surrender for its fulfilment.

Detailed surrender has to be carried out in the details of daily life as well as in the realms of thought and feeling and sensation. "When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it and carry it out in all the details of existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine....Live constantly in the Presence of the Divine; live in the feeling that it is this presence which moves you and is doing everything you do. Offer all your movements to it, not only every mental action, every thought and feeling, but even the most ordinary and external actions, such as eating; when you eat, you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you. When you can thus gather all your movements into the One Life, then you have unity instead of division...."[1] "In the Integral Yoga, the integral life down even to the smallest detail has to be transformed, to be divinised";[2] and, therefore, a detailed surrender carried out from moment to moment with an undeviating sincerity is the only means of success in it.

[1] & [2] Words of the Mother

Surrender—Active and Passive

Passive surrender is usually made by the ascetic seekers of the Divine. They exert their will only for the liberation of their souls and their union with God, but not for the transformation of their nature and life; for they do not believe in any such eventuality. They steel themselves to accept and endure, passively, calmly, uncomplainingly, whatever happens to them. No doubt it is a powerful discipline, but it is not very effective for a radical change of life and nature, which is the object of the Integral Yoga. The very passivity of their will precludes the direct action of the divine wil in their active nature. "What is required of you is not a passive surrender in which you become like a block, but to put your will at the disposal of the Divine Will."[1]

The Mother explains the difference between a passive and an active surrender by a felicitous example:

"You have a will and you can offer that will. Take the example of becoming conscious of your nights. If you take the attitude of passive surrender, you would say, 'When it is the Divine Will that I should become conscious, then I shall become conscious.' On the other hand, if you offer your will to the Divine, you begin to will; you say, 'I will become conscious of my nights.' you have the will that it should be done; you do not sit down idle and wait. The surrender comes in when you take the attitude that says, 'I give my will to the Divine. I intensely want to become conscious of my nights, I have not the knowledge, let the Divine Will work it out for me.' Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. This is the first step. If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive something in the form of an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do. Only you must remember that to surrender is to accept whatever is the result of your action, though the result may be quite diffe - ent from what you expect. On the other hand if your surrender is passive, you will do nothing and try nothing; you will simply go to sleep and wait for a miracle."[2]

[1] & [2] Words of the Mother

Surrender of the Vital

For this active surrender what is most necessary is the surrender of the vital part in us. The vital is the seat of power as well as of desire. To turn the vital to the Divine is to convert its desire into will and consecrate its power to the service of the Divine. The vital is the warrior in man, the born fighter. So long as it is under the influence of the ego, pivoted on the separative, self-centred, self-seeking consciousness, it opposes the greatest resistance to any radical spiritual change. It chafes, it revolts, it goes into doldrums—it is a past master in histrionics. It is thanks to its fitful revolt and petulance that a more or less prolonged period of the preliminary yogic life is usually marked by frequent oscillations and upsettings. But once the vital is converted, once it is convinced of the folly of running after the momentary satisfaction of fickle desires, once, illumined by the light of the soul, it ceases to emphasise its separative tendencies and clamour for the gratification of its power-lust, it becomes a very powerful instrument for the dynamic self-expression of the soul and the fulfilment of the Divine Will in the world. "But when the vital understands and is converted, if it is truly surrendered to the Divine Will, then its fighting capacity turns against anti-divine forces, the forces of obscurity that prevent the transformation: the powers of the vital are strong enough to conquer the enemies."[1]

Surrender is the only way to the realisation of the goal the Integral Yoga puts before it. Ensuring, as it does, the intervention of the divine Grace, it is the most infallible method of overcoming the difficulties and obstacles on the path. In regard to the difficulties we meet with in our physical nature—illness, indisposition, inertia, incapacity and weakness —the result of a sincere surrender is almost instantaneous and miraculous.

"As soon as physical conditions are a little difficult and there results from them some unease, if we know how to surrender completely before Thy Will, holding cheap life or death, health or illness, our integral being enters immediately into harmony with Thy law of love and life, and physical indisposition ceases, giving place to an ease, deep and peaceful."[2]

[1] The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo—part VIII by Nolini Kanta Gupta

[2] Prayers and Meditation by the Mother—March 17, 1914

Surrender, in order to be fully effective, must be ungrudging, spontaneous, unreserved and joyous. It must be like the self-abandon of a child to its mother, of a drop of water to the limitless ocean, of a pulsing ray of light to the effulgent sun. It must be a movement of love and joy. And that is possible only when the nature has been more or less unified and submitted to the direction of the psychic or the soul. Surrender is the act of transferring our being from falsehood to Truth, from darkness to Light, and from suffering and death to bliss and immortality. It is the most potent means of transcending the ego and its inherent limitations, and discovering the infinite and incorruptible reality of our being. It is the gate-way to divine perfection, realised in divine unity.

"Give up yourself—it is the best way of finding yourself."

Radha's Prayer

"O Thou whom at first sight I knew for the Lord of my being and my God, receive my offering.

Thine are all my thoughts, all my emotions, all the sentiments of my heart, all my sensations, all the movements of my life, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood. I am absolutely and altogether Thine, Thine without reserve. What Thou wilt of me, that I shall be. Whether Thou choosest for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome. Each one of Thy gifts will be always for me a gift divine bringing with it the supreme Felicity."

This Prayer of the Mother's is the high watermark of self-surrender and an example par excellence of the absolute self-consecration. And it is this kind of surrender that she expects of those who aspire to practise the Integral Yoga for a divine transformation of their nature and a perfect union with God in active life. Nothing short of it can lead to so glorious a fulfilment.

(To be continued)

Rishabhchand

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN SRI AUROBINDO

FROM Sri Aurobindo has gone forth, in these recent years, a view of life as well as a way of life, a philosophy as well as a religion. The view covers a complete *Weltanschauung*, an orientation of God, Man and Nature, and of the different philosophical issues connected with them that confront a thinking and an aspiring man in his attempt to know himself and his world. But, in Sri Aurobindo's approach to these problems of philosophy, we have to grow in our capacities in order to be able to know, we have to seek to become in nature comparable to the object to be known. Evidently, here, as it is in the persistent tradition of Indian philosophy, a way of life, a yoga, a religion becomes a necessary correlate of philosophy.

However, with Sri Aurobindo, the religion is the finite's seeking for the Infinite, a practice of spiritual life. In this conception the various denominational religions of mankind become so many pathways to the same spiritual goal. In fact, each is recognised as a distinctive approach yielding a unique experience of Reality and thereby making a characteristic contribution to the growth of an integral experience of the Divine. The differences and variations in creed and ceremonial are all secondary, since they are essentially instrumental in nature. The essential and intrinsic fact in a religion is the core of its spiritual experience. Thus Sri Aurobindo elaborates "a spiritual Religion of Humanity".

Since the dawn of this century, while the attraction of different denominational religions has become less, a general interestedness in religious feeling and consciousness has grown more. Sri Ramkrishna in his own great example had shown how different religions attracted him and how he gained from each a unique type of spiritual experience. A spiritual religion of humanity can thus confidently be said to be the popular and the growing religion of mankind and it is also the best promise of fulfilment, perfection and reconciliation of the varied and divergent religious adventures of humanity.

Now, in this religion, the unrecognised popular religion of today and very likely the inevitable religion of tomorrow, what is the essential conception of man, of his present nature and his future possibilities ?

Man is, to Sri Aurobindo, a part of the cosmic evolutionary process, in fact the advancing head of the great upsurging wave. He is a mind in a living body. He marks the emergence of mind in life, which in its turn had emerged from matter. Thus he is a synthesis of matter, life and mind. But mind is a limited power of consciousness. Hence it must be followed up by higher and more integral consciousnesses until the full integral consciousness, which Sri Aurobindo calls Supermind, is realised. The supramental consciousness is really the consciousness of highest integrality. It commands identity with the Infinite and, therefore, shares in its awareness. It does not ignorantly seek truth and try to get it in bits. It possesses the truth and that in its wholeness. Thus in the scheme of the cosmic evolution man and his mind are only a stage and they must by the logic of the evolutionary process itself lead on to the integral and unitary consciousness of the spirit, which sees and knows the truth. Man must become a being of supramental spiritual consciousness, a superman.

In Sri Aurobindo's own words, "Man is a transitional being, he is not final". Sri Aurobindo explains "We mean by man mind imprisoned in a living body. But mind is not the highest possible power of consciousness; for mind is not in possession of Truth, but only its ignorant seeker. Beyond mind is a supramental or gnostic power of consciousness that is in eternal possession of Truth. This supermind is at its source the dynamic consciousness, in its nature at once and inseparably infinite wisdom and infinite will of the divine Knower and Creator. Supermind is superman; a gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and triumphant evolutionary step to be reached by earthly nature."

This is the central truth of Sri Aurobindo's conception of man. And a recognition of it must give to mankind a new prospect of life in the individual as well as in the community. Today we affirm mind as not only the highest but also the final form of human life and the result is that we feel obliged to accept our present situation of hatreds, fears, divisions, partialities and helplessness as necessary. We do not have an integral hold upon life, a unifying vision and power and think that they are not possible either. But if an integral spiritual consciousness be recognised as a term of evolution necessary to follow mind and an aspiration for it develops and grows strong in consequence of such recognition, then man would seek to live more and

more out of a vision of unity in life. That will mean a new moulding influence upon the whole life of man, his science, his technology, his philosophy, his literature and his social life, national and international.

This conception of man, of which we have considered the principal content, is obviously foundational to a new life and a new culture of man. It affirms in a clear and emphatic manner that the integral spiritual consciousness, in rising qualities, is in course of development, in the race, as a matter of evolution. Further that this process can be much accelerated by a recognition of the fact and a conscious cooperation with it. And this means that Unity, Harmony and Supreme Truth can become dynamic and operative ideals here and now, in the life and culture of man.

(Contributed to a Symposium on "The Concept of Man in Great Religions")

INDRA SEN

THE LIFE DIVINE

An Outline

Vol. II—Chapter XI

The Boundaries of the Ignorance

VIEWED broadly, we see that the Ignorance is experienced in us as a succession of waves of being and force, which formulate in mental cognition and sensation of things in Time and Space. Time to us is a flow of dynamic movement and Space an objective field for the experience of a developing awareness. Thus we live in a present Time and memory links us with past experience. Also thought, will and action—through mind, life and body—work in the present while the force of being in us works towards a future end. All this partial knowledge is co-ordinated by perception, memory and intelligence to be utilised for all our actions which help us to grow. All this totality of experience is gathered into a consistency around an ego-sense, which produces a persistent and limited field of experience to the contacts of Nature. Through the ego-sense we gain a basis of coherence out of a mass of impressions and also we build up a symbol of self which does duty for the hidden, real self. Thus the surface mentality is always ego-centric. It serves the purpose of holding together the movements of our nature. The ego-centre must necessarily continue until it is replaced by the emergence of the true self.

This co-ordinated experience, however, is a small part of our working consciousness. We select only a limited number of perceptions that come to our surface consciousness, and of these memory retains only a part. Of our remembered past one again selects only a small portion for our use in action. This is the method in Nature—a narrow selection for use, and a large rejection. Yet this is not the whole account, since the greater part of what has been stored in us is put to other uses. If we take the whole cycle of rebirth we find that all experience has its use, until it is no longer needed. Our surface view does not at all give us the true picture.

Even much of what goes on on the surface we cannot explain. But a deeper psychological observation shows that most of what comes to us is from a concealed consciousness which is not altogether subconscient. There is a submerged subliminal self, an inner being with a vast reservoir of experience.

Our surface self is but a fragment of this real, concealed self. It is this inner being that retains all our experiences. The co-ordinated understanding can only formulate a small portion of these, aided by a limited memory. But the inner being has retained all in an accurate form and relation. Also the perceptions of the inner being extend beyond the bounds of the physical senses. Many of our impulsions that we regard as subconscious are in fact urges from the subliminal self. We have first, therefore, to know this inner being.

The whole of our inner being is in a sense the subliminal self, enlarged to include the subconscient and the superconscient. But we have to consider its three parts separately—the subconscient, the subliminal, and the superconscient—in order to understand their true nature.

The subconscious includes those operations which take place below the mental level, such as the physical and vital workings of the body which have their own mode of function apart from the mind. We have to see in fact that the vital-physical part has its own form of consciousness.

The mind merely makes a mentalised picture of the physical and vital functions. But if we separate the mind as witness from these parts, we see movements that are impelled by desire, hunger, instinct, pain. It is a nervous, sensational and automatic mode of consciousness. This is the vital and physical substratum. But below this is the true subconscious, which sends up to the surface consciousness mixed and chaotic impulsions and motives, automatic movements of the obscurest parts of our nature.

The subliminal itself is not of this subconscious character. It has the same capacities as our waking being—sense, memory, intelligence and will—but wider and more developed. It exceeds the outer mind in power of direct awareness. The surface mind is involved, and bound by the bodily life; but the subliminal, since it envelops and supports the outer nature, is free of this limitation. Only in the subliminal layers nearest to the surface consciousness is there a mixture and confusion.

These three elements of our being—the subconscient, the subliminal and the waking consciousness—are not the whole of our being. There is something above which is the spiritual part of our self. While the subli-

minal is as yet on the Knowledge-Ignorance level, though luminous and powerful, the superconscient part is aware of a supreme highest Reality—Spirit, God or Oversoul.

Through an extension of our knowledge we can reach the highest Self who is also the Cosmic Self. The Cosmic Self is also veiled in Mind, Life and Matter, and has descended into the Inconscient. Out of the Inconscient has emerged the individual being, with the subliminal existence behind. But the Cosmic Soul, or superconscient, is like the ether which overarches and determines our movements. It is through this higher ether of superconscience that we are conscious of our true self and spirit, and can pass to a supreme knowledge. Yet we are more ignorant of this part than the rest of our being. This is our first and most fundamental ignorance.

In our surface being we are a becoming in Time. Out of a long past and future we are only aware of a little life, and much of that is lost to memory. It seems—from the point of view of the present—that we first came into existence with the physical birth and shall cease to exist by the death of the body. But this is only true of the physical part of our being. Our real self is the Superconscient which becomes the subliminal; and out of the latter the little surface self has been formed. The surface self is but one expression of our larger self. We have a becoming in Time which goes back perhaps through many births; for the superconscient part is eternal, while the subliminal being is an infinite field of various experience which presupposes all the past and all the future. Yet our mind knows only the memory of its present physical existence. This ignorance of the pre-physical existence is another fundamental limitation in man's knowledge.

Man is not only ignorant of his inner self—superconscient, subliminal and subconscient—but also of the outer world, which appears to him as something separate from him. In the same way his superconscient Self appears to be something separate, an extra-cosmic God; and his subliminal being, when he becomes aware of it, seems to be another consciousness with a power to guide him. The subliminal is in fact a wider world; and the subliminal Self is that which manifests the world. Our body is one knot in an indivisible Matter; our life one eddy in an indivisible Life; our mind one recording station in an indivisible Mind; and our soul one portion of an indivisible Spirit. Our ego keeps us tied to the superficial being, which is separated by strong, though always permeable walls from the larger being.

Ignorant of our existence in Time, we are also ignorant of ourselves in Space. Consciousness only of the body, and the mind and life identified with it, forms the ego life. If Space is the co-existence of apparently independent things, then their unity is only possible by a Nature-force, Prakriti. It constitutes a co-existence in one Being. Space may then be regarded as the self-conceptive extension of one Being, a spiritual Existence with movement of its Conscious-Force. This Conscious-Force is concentrated in a multiplicity of bodies, lives and minds, over which the soul presides. Because of this concentration each centre is cut off from the rest and from its own past and future. In order to deepen the individual consciousness, therefore, we must know the one Mind, the one Life, and the one Matter, instead of only so much as is brought to our surface consciousness. We are ignorant of our universal self, as we are of our superconscient, subliminal and subconscient selves. This many-sided Ignorance thus gives us the irresistible impulse to strive for self-knowledge and an integral consciousness.

Chapter XII

The Origin of the Ignorance

We have now to consider the pragmatic origin of Ignorance, from the point of view of the integral Oneness of existence. How could the manifold ignorance and separative knowledge arise from an absolute Being who is Indivisible ? But the one Being cannot be ignorant of itself or of the action of things. And though in our true self we are that Absolute Being, yet we are ignorant of ourselves and of things. It does not solve the difficulty by saying that mind, as the seat of ignorance, is part of an illusory being or non-existence ; for this denies the unity of the Absolute. Maya can be nothing but a power of the Absolute, and the soul or individual self a subject of this divine power which is acing as Nature. Ignorance is then part of the movement of the One, a purposive creation for a cosmic end.

We cannot say that because the individual being is subject to ignorance he is not One with the Supreme ; for we see that there is the universal fact of unity in difference. We are one in essence, but different in active nature. Yet this does not explain how the essence has been divided from the form and the activity, although this is not a complete division as it may at first seem. On the other hand we may escape the problem by

considering as Unknowable all that is beyond our experience. This is not the true solution, since the Supreme knows the cause of Ignorance, and hence the individual essence must be also capable of knowing.

If the Supreme is ultimately the Unknowable then it may be regarded as the Non-Existent (of the Upanishad), or the state of Nirvana (of Buddha), something beyond expression and understanding which can only be expressed negatively as the absolute Non-Being.

But this absolute Nothingness can bring forth only nothing, not even an illusion. On the other hand it may be regarded that out of the Non-existence anything may arise, and that the order, if any, of the universe is some accident. It may thus seem that only out of an absolute chaos could this mysterious sum of contraries—maybe a huge error, which we call the world—appear. But only an absolute Inconscience and Ignorance could be the origin of such a universe, not an absolute Consciousness and Knowledge. Anything may be true in such a cosmos; and all opinions may be equally valid or invalid. But this way of thinking ultimately leads to the negation of the whole aim of philosophy. What we call the Unknowable must be the unknown—beyond mental knowledge. It cannot be a Nothingness, but a Something that can be discovered through our highest possible knowledge. It is only this Something which can reconcile all truths and give the key to the paradoxes of the universe.

Vedanta has revealed this Something as Sachchidananda, a trinity of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss. From this positive starting-point it becomes evident that an action of consciousness has manifested itself as knowledge, and yet limited that knowledge to create the phenomenon of Ignorance. This limitation of knowledge is, in its nature, a concentration of Force or Shakti. It is this concentration or Tapas that has brought forth the seed for the creation of a universe out of all that was involved. We have to see that this dynamic force of Tapas is not restricted in the Divine Nature, as in us, by the separation of surface self from the world and the consequent division between inner and outer. It is an integral Tapas in an indivisible Existence.

But then we may ask, what is the role of this Force and its concentration in regard to the status where all is immobile. In ourselves Tapas, the active consciousness, is associated with a play of energy. And even in that which is passive there is a conscious force, since there is always the possibility of action emerging from it—or the action may be initiated by the universal Energy. In Nature we know that all things are maintained in their

action or in their immobility by a secret, unceasing motion. This takes place through the power which is in concentration (as Tapas). We also know that in ourselves we reach an absolute passivity of consciousness ; and in this passive consciousness there is an apparent absence of Tapas.

Yet we observe that through this passivity in ourselves we arrive at a greater unifying knowledge, by which we realise a universal or transcendent Power which belongs to the Divine. This happens because we have stilled the ignorant limited action, and open ourselves to the supreme status, or more dynamically to the power and action which is Tapas. We see, however, that even in the immobile status there is a concentration of consciousness which is also Tapas. Thus this concentration of the power of consciousness (or Tapas) is the character of both the passive and active consciousness of the Supreme. It sustains all creation and action, and at the same time inwardly supports all status of immobile passivity.

Yet the creativity and passivity are two different, and even opposite, things; or rather it is a movement of the soul from one poise to the other. One is a dispensing of energy, and the other a withholding of energy. They are the same consciousness and energy, not different. Behind every activity, in fact, there is a passive power which supports and governs it and no action can exhaust the original power from which it proceeds. When we stand back from our action, we see that our whole being stands behind it, and that the passivity is a poise of self-reserved energy. This is true also of the power of the Infinite.

We should note that the passive and active status of the Absolute imply one Existence, which reserves Its Tapas in what we call passivity and gives itself in what we call Its activity. They are two poles of one being : passivity as Tapas in concentration, and activity as released Tapas in waves of action. It is a continual process of conversion and transmutation of energy throughout the universe, in the Absolute and in the individual being.

The Reality is simultaneously an eternal passivity and an eternal activity of Being. We, from our relative experience, see them separately as Nirguna and Saguna. It has been thought that the individual passes from one state to the other; in the action it becomes ignorant, but in the passivity it becomes aware of its apparent being. This is like passing from a sleeping condition into waking; but this is only because we live in exclusive states, one cut off from the other. By a deeper experience we realise that our larger being is aware of all that happens, whether in sleep or waking state. In the ignorance we identify ourselves with only a partial consciousness, and hence we lose

the self of action when entering the passivity. This in spiritual experience becomes a silence separated from the dynamic Reality. But this is only a phase in the soul's realisation of its true integral being, static and dynamic.

The Absolute does not pass alternately from passivity to activity, for we can become aware of the eternal passivity that is upholding the cosmic activity. The Integral Reality is both active and passive simultaneously. It is the partial action in us that makes us experience them alternately; but this is not the experience of our integral being which possesses the passivity and activity together.

Yet the Supreme exceeds both immobile self and mobile being. The Supreme Being is not a mere sum of passive and active aspects, but aware of both as his universal expressions. The passivity is aware of the activity, just as the activity is aware of the passivity. In action or in silence the Supreme must be ever aware of his absolute being.

Therefore we can say that the Ignorance cannot originate in the Absolute itself, but belongs to a partial action of the being. There is no primal Ignorance. The original power of Consciousness (Maya) cannot be an ignorance, but must be a transcendent and universal power. But does Ignorance, a partial and relative movement, belong to the creation of the multiplicity of souls, since each is divided from the original Oneness ? But this is only true of the superficial consciousness of the individual, not of his inner being.

The body is the outer aspect in the division in Nature. Mind also when identified with body has its own separate form, although in itself it has a power of greater penetration. It is only in soul-consciousness that unity becomes possible, by identification with other souls. This realisation can take place in the waking consciousness.

Thus ignorance is not inherent in the nature of multiplicity. The Absolute exceeds both unity and multiplicity. He is aware of the multiplicity of souls, and aware of the unity of all Souls; and in each he is aware of his oneness. So is the soul (Jivatman) aware of the One, and aware of its unity with the Many. The ignorance resides in the divided life and mind, which can be illumined; their division is not permanent.

Ignorance is a stage when mind is separated from its supramental basis. It appears in the earth-life in the individual being identified by his dividing mind with the form of things. But form is really a concentrated energy, a knot of force of consciousness, and is not enduring. The real basis of division, then, is the concentration of Tapas, which the mind identifies with separate movements and separate forms. Thus a wall of separation is built

up between the consciousness in each form. What then is the nature of this absorbing and separating concentration of Consciousness-Force (Tapas) ?

Chapter XIII

Tapas and the Ignorance

We see that Ignorance is a subordinate phenomenon of the Absolute, a concentration of consciousness absorbed in a part of knowledge or action; for the awareness of the Absolute dwells not only in the unity but also in the multiplicity. The One may be concentrated in itself and exclude the Many, or the Many in their action may exclude the awareness of the One, or the individual being may exclude both One and the rest of the Many. These three may be operative together in the action of Nature, or Prakriti (that is, the force of active being).

We see further that the Absolute in its integrality cannot be the source of the Ignorance. Neither can the One or the Many in their integrality exclude the Many or the One. Ignorance appears in the executive Conscious-Force absorbed in its works; it is a partial consciousness and movement. Ignorance is a purposeful oblivion of Nature for the execution of a particular work.

Tapas is always present, even in the infinity of being, a self-gathered dwelling of the eternal Awareness. The concentration may be essential, at one end in the superconscient Silence, or at the other in the Inconscient. Or it may be a luminous absorption and self-immersion in the supramental consciousness. Or thirdly it may be an integral or part-multiple concentration in the global overmental awareness. Or fourthly it may be a separative concentration which is the nature of the Ignorance. All these states of consciousness are held indivisibly together by the supreme integrality of the Absolute.

This concentration, a self-held dwelling in itself or on itself as object, belongs to the very nature of conscious being. Even the infinite extension of consciousness is a self-held diffusion. An exclusive concentration in a single subject or object is but one form of Tapas, in which there is a holding back behind it the rest of self-knowledge. Separative knowledge and Ignorance occur when the consciousness limits itself to a single field and is aware only of that.

In man's own consciousness we see a surface movement which does all the action. But behind this stream of energy is a whole sea of consciousness,

of which the stream is but a selection. The sea is the subliminal self—above, below, within and around—held together by the soul or psychic entity. In the stream or superficial consciousness Tapas is concentrated on the surface in a mass of superficial workings. But it is the hidden sea, the source of all movement, which is doing all the action. This sea, the integral conscious being, is not ignorant, but in the surface being there is a limited practical self-oblivion, which is not, however, a binding self-ignorance.

Man therefore acts and lives absorbed in the present moment, ignorant of his future and his past except a small part recalled by memory; and what he recalls of the past is but a shadow of reality. The true consciousness within him is aware of the active, living past, which plays its part in our lives as Karma. It can also be aware of the future. But living only in the present we are merely confined to a definite succession of moments.

Man in his superficial consciousness is dependent on his ego-sense, which is but a centralising mental construction, to give him the continuity of past, present and future. There is, however, an intuition of self behind it. Yet the moment is the practical truth in the superficial consciousness for the movements of the individual life. Man therefore proceeds by a partial, half-true knowledge, in which there is the real self and knowledge hidden behind. In the same way man identifies himself with the outer form of his present existence, forgetful of his past births and of his future.

One pragmatic use of exclusive concentration on the surface consciousness is that at any moment a man may play exclusively a particular part—actor, poet, soldier—and forget the rest of himself. On the completeness with which he can put aside the rest of himself depends the success of his action. But we see that what a man does brings with it his whole character, his whole past (not only of his present life), and the world around him also. This concentrated action reveals Tapas to be a great power of the consciousness and not really a deficiency. This active self-oblivion is in any case of a transitory nature, ever shifting, so that the superficial man can again recover the real man within him. In both cases there is the movement of exclusive concentration, each with different circumstances and manner of working.

Any particular action can be a concentration of Tapas; the actor becomes the part and forgets the real man. For the moment he is the inspired impersonal energy. Such may be the case with the actor, poet, soldier or even a person overcome by anger. All this, however, is but a momentary self-forgetfulness.

This power is carried to its absolute extent in the universal conscious-

ness, in the inconscience of material Nature. This inconscience, even in the purely material world, is not the sole reality. In all energy of Nature there is a secret soul and will, without whose presence the work of Nature cannot be done. It is the action of energy that is absorbed, imprisoned in a form—Prakriti unaware of Purusha. But the Conscious Being is ever aware and supports and informs the action.

Yet the inconscience, like the ignorance, is completely phenomenal and superficial; and it is only through the impulsion of the evolution that consciousness can emerge stage by stage out of its imprisoned form. In man is reached the highest possibility, though there is still the superficial working. In material Nature we see this self-forgetfulness carried to its furthest point, in the law of matter's restricted action. In man there is a partial knowledge and a partial self-ignorance struggling to return to self-knowledge. In both man and material Nature the ignorance is effective within the limits of their respective movements. It is in fact the involved consciousness and knowledge which is evolving back to itself, acting first as an Inconscience and then as an Ignorance.

Having traced the root-nature of the Ignorance, a practical mode of separative conscious energy, we may therefore consider the reason, aim and process of this movement. The Ignorance is a necessity for the manifestation of the world. Thus man, only in his subjection to Time and living from moment to moment, can become a participant in the Time-movement of the evolving world. His egoistic ignorance is even a protection against the largeness of the universal. A wider time-knowledge in this stage may be a distraction from the action of his present. He has to live in the limiting mind in order to have the protection.

The purpose of the Ignorance is for the joy of the spirit, self-discovery out of self-oblivion. The Divine Nature (Sachchidananda) descends into material Nescience in order to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being. The soul, then, accepts the ignorance as a progressive awakening knowledge out of the original nescience. In these conditions it has to rediscover and transform itself to fulfil the purpose of its descent into the Inconscience. The aim of the soul in the human is to find the joy and light in earthly conditions, reforming them in terms of an embodied material existence. The Ignorance is a necessary though subordinate term, a purposeful descent and a divine opportunity to create out of Matter a temple of the Divinity.

The ignorance is not present in the true soul, but belongs to a phase in the development of Nature (Prakriti). It is a principle that belongs to

the plane of Mind; for the mind is a power that differentiates, with the sense of unity behind it but not in its workings. Mind is a derivative power of supermind; and this latter possesses the unity. But there is a veil between Mind and Supermind, and this veil maintains the Ignorance. The veil is the Overmind which keeps the mind completely absorbed in the workings of formative Energy, and at the same time supports the mechanical action of material Nature.

When we speak of a partial movement of Consciousness-Force absorbed in its action, we mean that there is an occult energy behind with only a frontal active energy in the limited field of movement. This integral Force veiled by the Inconscience, does the work through the frontal energy. In order to become aware of this conscious Force behind the veil we have to quieten this surface movement of Nature in ourselves, and concentrate on the inner or psychic being. This, however, is still an exclusiveness until we realise the integral or global consciousness, which includes both quiescent soul (Purusha) and its instrument, the active Nature (Prakriti). This realisation brings a freedom from the limitations of Nature's working separated from Spirit. One may even ascend to the higher level of Self and Nature and from there bring down powers to transform the lower Nature. This is what can happen when our being decides to raise its evolution from the mental to the supramental level. Tapas, or concentration of Consciousness-Force, is the effective means.

We have to see how the All-Conscient succeeds in reaching a superficial ignorance and inconscience. There is no mystery in this process if we see that the Ignorance is really a power of the Knowledge to limit itself, an exclusive concentration in practice with the working of the whole conscious being behind. It is a force, not a disability, a power of self-limitation for a particular working, quite compatible with—and not opposed to—the conscious-force of the Absolute.

We thus see that cosmos is the natural play of the being, consciousness, force and self-delight of the Absolute, whose infinity is not limited by this play of finite phenomena. Infinity itself is expressed in this finite form. In this way the Ignorance as a power also expresses a natural capacity of variation in knowledge, the One in its self-enjoyment in the Many. At one extreme is the power of self-absorption unaware of the world, and at the reverse extreme is the power by absorption in the cosmic workings. Neither poise limits the integral self-aware existence of the Divine Nature (Sachchidananda). These apparent oppositions only express what is in fact Ineffable.

"PARAMÉ VYOMAN" IN THE RIG VEDA

PARAMÉ VYOMAN. This is a combination of words that is almost always found together. It is similar to "Paramé Padé" or "Paramam Padam" which is also found in the Veda.

The ordinary meaning of "Vyoman" is the sky or the intermediate region "Antariksha." Indian Science of inner culture recognises many planes of consciousness besides the physical which is the material part of man's being. The Physical is symbolised as Earth or "Prithivi", the Prāna or the vital is represented by Antariksha, the mid-region, and the Mind or Manas by "Dyaus" or Heaven. Vyoman is the all-pervading ether the principle that carries vibrations in space. In fact Vyoman has been equated to space by many people.

Now the Indian Science of inner culture, Yoga, has found by experience several kinds of ethers. The ether that pervades the supreme level of consciousness is therefore called "Param Vyoman", "the supreme ether."

This spiritual significance that originated in the Veda has continued to hold good in the Upanishad and the later philosophical literature of India. Thus Tait 2.1.1. speaks of "Nihitam Guhāyām Paramé Vyoman" or "eshā Bhārgavi Varuni Vidyā Paramé Vyoman pratisthitā".

Mundaka says : "Vyomni ātmā pratisthitah"—
"the self is established in the Vyoman, in the ether".

This shows that the spiritual significance attached to this continuation of words continued to hold in later times.

Sayana in his commentary avoids this straight meaning and explains it as"Vividha rakshané Nabhasi" or as "Vedi" of the sacrifice, always a physical or a material sense which altogether ignores the psychological and spiritual significance.

Only, in I. 164. 39 Sayana is compelled almost against his will, to admit a spiritual significance for these words. In the commentary on this Rik he says : "Paramé Vyomannityuktalakshané brahmani ya ésho antarādityé hiranmayah purushah drishyaté".[1]

[1] परमे व्योमन्नित्युक्तलक्षणे ब्रह्मणि य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्मयः पुरुषः दृश्यते ।

So here he admits "golden Purusha" in the heart.

He even, for once, brings out the qualities of "Vyoman" as he has not done in his commentary on other Riks containing the same words:[1] "Vyomani alepatwām, nīrūpatwam, vyāpitwādi Sādrishyena vyométyūktam".

"Vyoma has got these qualities of non-adhesion being formless and pervading." These are the powers of the spiritual ether which is really the ether of an infinite consciousness. Sayana further adds that "Vyoman" does not depend upon any other object; for it is itself the support of all—"Sarvasyādhisthānatwena"[2] and adds "Rakshakatwat"[3] because it protects all by its pervasiveness and affording support to all things.

Further in the Rik I. 164. 41 he adds[4]—"paramé Vyoman utkrishté hridaya ākāshe mulādhāre".

In almost all other Riks where this combination occurs Sayana always gives "Protecting ether"—or "Sacrificial altar" and "Dyuloka" or "Niratishaye". IX. 86. 15— (I. 143. 2 V. 15. 2) Absolute or supreme IX. 86. 15. or Ākāsha, VII. 82. 2. or "Antariksha" VII. 5. 7. as the meaning.

At one place he makes out the significance of "Parame Vyoman" as "Yagna—the sacrifice !—This is what he says : "Vyomani vividhamomāvanam gamanam devatānāmatra iti Vyomayagna".[5]

The meaning "supreme ether" in the sense of a higher level of consciousness should be applied wherever the words are needed. It would then be seen that the sense of the Rik is clarified and gains in consistency.

It should be noted that "Paramé Padé" practically means the same as "Paramé Vyoman"—with a slight difference in the shade of meaning only. In I. 62. 17. the second line contains "paramé Vyoman".

"Perfectly achieving, he upheld earth and heaven in the highest ether of the revealed superconscient (paramam guhāyam) as the Enjoyer of two wives" Sri Aurobindo.

In I. 72. 2 and I. 72. 4 the phrase "Parame Padé" is used. "Sharmayuvah Padavyo Dhiyandhā Stasthuh Padé Paramé Charvagné" : "Turning to toil on his track, upholding the Thought, they stood in the supreme plane, they reached the beauty of the "Flame" (Sri Aurobindo)

1 व्योमनि अलेपत्वं नीरूपत्वं व्यापित्वादि सादृश्येन व्योमेत्युक्तम्
2 सर्वस्याधिष्ठानत्वेन
3 रक्षकत्वात्
4 परमे व्योमन् उत्कृष्टे हृदयाकाशे मूलाधारे
5 व्योमनि विविधमोमावनं गमनं देवानामत्र इति व्योम–यज्ञ

Supreme plane is that on which one finds supreme ether.

I. 72. 4 "The masters of sacrifice discovered and in their impetuous might bore the vast Earth and Heaven, then the mortal knew them and by his holding of the upper hemisphere[1] perceived the Fire, standing in the supreme plane"—Sri Aurobindo.

"Nemadhitā"—"Nemi"—"half", referring apparently to the great Heaven —"brihad Dyauh"—the "upper half" beyond which is the supreme plane".

I. 143. 2 says Agni was born in the supreme ether, i.e., in the superconscient plane of the Truth. The Rik says that Agni became manifest to Mātarishvāh, the God of wind or the Universal Life Force.

"No sooner (was he) born in the supreme ether than, Agni, became manifest to Mātarishivā, one who sleeps in the Mother; by the power of the fuel and by the will he has illumined intensely both earth and heaven".

In I. 164. 35 speech is said to originate in the "Supreme ether" of the creator. Evidently this psychological reference cannot be explained by either the "altar" or "sacrifice" or mere "physical space". The whole Rik clearly indicates that the "Sacrifice" the "altar", "Soma" and "supreme ether" must all be symbolic. For Dirghatamas, the great mystic poet of the Rig Veda says :—(in reply to questions he himself raises in I. 164. 34.)

"This altar is the supreme end of the Earth, this sacrifice here is the navel centre of the universe, this Soma—(the spiritual essential delight of existence) is the seminal fluid of the male Horse,—this Creator is himself the supreme ether of this speech." Sacrifice, the self-giving on the part of the human being, is the navel centre round which is maintained the life of the Cosmos and when the human being raises his altar of sacrifice that is the "Supreme end" of the Earth. It is the highest spiritual movement on earth. The inspired speech which finds utterance in the Rik originates on the higher level of consciousness—, in the Supreme Ether, where the Creator himself gives the inspiration.

The Rik 39th (I. 164. 39) makes the point clear by emphasising that the knowledge of the supreme Ether—the superconscient Infinite Being, Consciousness and Delight—is essential in order that the Riks may be effective.

If this spiritual import of the Riks is not known mere mechanical repetition, or the mere outward, external meaning does no good.

"The Riks—the hymns—exist in a supreme Ether imperishable and

[1] नेमधिता

immutable in which all the Gods are seated; he who knows it not what shall he do with the Rik?"

This "Akshara" "Paramé" "Vyoman" — is the seat of all the Gods, it is the Superconscient plane of Truth from where all higher dynamisms and creations proceed.

The same idea is elaborated in I. 164. 41 where speech is referred to as गौरी—"Gauri." In I. 164. 40 the Seer has referred to the Cow as "unslayable"—"Aghnyé." "Gau" has the double meaning of "Ray" and "Cow" and that this Ray is not the physical ray of light but the psychological Ray of knowledge and consciousness is shown by the connection between the Cow and Speech. This Speech is that which at its highest arises on levels beyond human intellect—in the Higher Heavens,—in Rochanas and in Swar.

"The Gauri, the cow of Speech, fashioned the waters after measuring[1] (them),—one-footed, two-footed, she with four feet, eight and nine footed she became—and in the supreme Ether thousand-lettered".

In III. 32. 10, a hymn to Indra, Vishwāmitra says :—

"As soon as born, O Indra, thou didst drink the Soma in the supreme Ether for delight thou, didst then enter the earth and heaven from every side and became the ancient support of all who act (or who have will)".

Indra is the Lord of the Higher Mind. His Delight in the form of Soma-drinking gives him the exhilaration to enter Earth the material principle, and Heaven, the mental element. Having entered them Indra acts as the support of all higher movements of will or action.

So also in V. 15. 2. there is a direct reference to Truth—not to any God or symbolic imgage in connection with "Paramé Vyoman." "By the truth they held the Truth that holds all, in the might of the sacrifice, in the supreme Ether, they who reached the Gods seated in the law that is the upholder of heaven, reached by the Godheads born and unborn". Sri Aurobindo (Word to word meaning.)

Ritena—By the Truth, Ritam—the Truth; Dharunam—that holds; Dhārayanta—they held; Yagnasya—of the sacrifice; shāke—in the might,

[1] Note: "*Mimāya*" in II. 15.3 Sayana explains as "*Nirmitavān*"—whereas in III. 53.15 and III. 55.13 he explains it as "Shabdam Karoti" "Dhvanim Karoti." VII. 18.16 the sense of "measure" is clear. It is derived from the root मा '*mā*'—to measure. "Gauri" Sayana explains in IX. 12.3 as "*Mādhyamikā* Vak" and quotes "Gauri *Gāndharvi*" as "*Vāknāma*", as the names of speech.

Paramé Vyoman—in the supreme ether; Divo Dharman—in the law of heaven; Dharuné—one that upholds; Sedusho—seated, Nrin—Godheads, Jātaih—by those born, ajātām—unborn; Abhi Nanākshu—they reached, ye—those who.

Sayana only says : Paramé "Utkrishté" Vyoman Sthāné"—"Uttara Vedyām."—northern altar in the sacrifice.

In V. 63. 1 a hymn to Mitra Varuna :—

"Mitra Varuna, guardians of the Truth, having Truth as their law of action, stood above in their chariot in the Supreme ether". 'Chariot' in Veda symbolises "movement". "Mitra is the God of Harmony and Love and Varuna, the Lord of wideness and Purity. Both are powers of the Sun, the supramental Light, the Powers of Truth-Consciousness active in the Cosmos.Varuna is called Samrāt, Emperor, and Indra is called Swarāt Self-Ruler. Varuna is from ooru "wide"—, his power is pervasiveness, omnipresence. The Riks says that Mitra and Varuna are guardians of the Truth, and Truth is their Dharma—law of action. They act from above, from the superconscient plane in the supreme Ether. This Superconscient plane is the goal of the sacrifice, the aim of the Aryan's efforts.

VII. 5. 7 "As thou camest to birth in the supreme Ether at once as Vayu thou didst guard the path, thou criest aloud bringing to birth the worlds, according them as a gift to the Son, O knower of all things born." —Sri Aurobindo.

This is a hymn to Vaishwanara, Agni—

In VII. 82. 2 Indra and Varuna are hymned together :—

"The one (Varuna) is called Samrāt, the all-ruler, the emperor, the other (Indra) is called Swarāt—the self-ruler, the two mighty ones. Mitra and Varuna have great plenitude of wealth; All the Gods in the supreme ether, together gave you two, O raining Bulls, their energy (might) and their strength".

Though the phrase in this Rik IX. 70. 1—is "Purvyé Vyoman", the sense is equal to that of "paramé Vyoman."

"Thrice did the seven nourishing Ones yield the true substance fit for mixing with thee; when he (Soma) increased by the truths, he created four other worlds of beautiful form."

[Note :—Ashiram. III. 53. 14. VIII. 2. 10, VIII. 6. 19, VII. 69.6, IX. 64. 14—The word is used in the sense of something—whether curds or milk or any other product of the cow—fit for mixture with Soma—the wine of delight or ecstasy.

"Soma mishrana Yogyam Payah"; "Kshirādikam Shrayana Dravyam."; (निर्णिजम्) "Nirnijam"—Sayana derives from निज् : शौचपोषणयोः Shaucha poshanayoh"—It can mean therefore, "shining", "clear and well-nourished".

In I. 113. 14; VII. 19. 23 Sayana takes it as "Rupanāma—"form"; also in I. 25. 13 where he takes it in the sense of "Body".

REFERENCES : I. 62. 7, I. 72. 2, I. 72. 4, I. 143. 2, I. 164. 35, I. 164. 39, I. 164. 41, III. 32. 10, V. 12. 2, V. 63. 1, VII. 5. 7, VII. 82. 2, IX. 70. 1, IX. 86. 15.]

A. B. PURANI

REVIEWS

The Atharva Veda : Vratyakanda, *By Sri Sampurnanand.* Pp. 60, price Rs. 3/- Publishers : Ganesh & Co., Madras 17.

Though the Indian Vedic literature as a whole has been treated by the western scholars as a kind of juvenile expression of the primitive society of nature-worshipping Aryans, there are certain parts, notably in the Rig Veda, which have been singled out with a touch of exuberant condescension as pieces of rare philosophical value. May be they are later accretions; may be also they are ideas which floated down from further west; all the same they are gems of poetic beauty and daring quest. So too there are elevating portions in the Sama and the Yajur Veda. But none — almost none — in the Atharva. The Atharva Samhita is simply and plainly a treatise of charms, magic, witchcraft and spurious medicine. It is a collection concocted by the later wily Brahmans, overspread by liberal helpings from the Rik and Yajus Samhitas, and tagged on to the three real Vedas, *Trayi*, with a view to fortify and perpetuate their own priestly hold on the growing society. Or possibly, say some scholars, the hymns of the Atharva represent the life and movement of the lower strata of the society as the Rig Veda does of the higher classes.

The author of the present book rejects this consistent condemnation of the Atharva Veda by the orientalists. In a spirited Introduction he questions their premisses and exposes the weakness of their argument. He writes :

"There are prayers for freedom from various diseases and relief from pain and many of these prayers are meant to accompany the administration of suitable medical treatment, internal and external. There are references to a number of herbs possessing valuable medicinal properties and such a non-spiritual subject as the catheter also finds mention. There are also no doubt the portions dealing with *Yatus* and other spirits of the dark worlds. But while the Atharva Samhita no doubt contains a proportionately large amount

of such matter, it does not stand alone. There are references to such spirits elsewhere as well, particularly in the Rig Veda and even charms and incantations are not an exclusive feature of the Atharva Veda.....The Gods to whom the prayers are addressed are the same as those who are sought to be approached through the most sublime of Vedic prayers. They give expression to the hopes, aspirations and fears of the common man who yearns for a place in the everlasting regions of the gods but cannot, at the same time, forget his crops and cattle, his wife in the pains of labour, his friends and his enemies. The man who gives thought to such matters is not necessarily a pessimist or a victim of superstition. The fact that he fortifies his dose of secular medicine with a prayer gives evidence of shrewd commonsense, not of a mind dulled by the teachings of a priestly hierarchy. In conjunction with the Mantras in this and other Vedas asking for prosperity, success in war or bliss in the hereafter, the portion of the Atharva Veda condemned for its crudeness helps to give us a complete picture of the society of those days. There is no question of the Rig Veda presenting a view of that society in an earlier and purer and the Atharva in a later and more degenerate condition. The one supplements the other. The story of the Gadarene swine cannot be left out of a consideration of the society in which Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount." (P. 2-3)

And then he states his considered view :

"My own conviction is that the Atharva Veda contains Suktas pregnant with a spiritual meaning and containing the highest teachings on Yoga and Vedanta, whose proportion is quite as high as that of similar pieces in the Rig Veda. European scholars, obsessed by the idea that the old Aryan religion was at the best, a higher form of animism and nature-worship, are apt to class all such spiritual and philosophical discourses as later accretions. I do not accept their premisses and cannot accept their conclusions....

That it was not previously recognised as a Veda even if the Mantras it contains did form one definite collection — a very doubtful proposition, indeed, — is tolerably certain. It is equally certain that it gradually won its way to its present status through its intrinsic merits, the profundity of the thought it embodies, the catholicity of its general approach, the lofty tone of its moral injunctions and the message of help and hope which it brings to the ordinary man and woman who has one eye fixed on heaven but cannot take the other away from the immediate calls of this world.

It should be worthwhile to pursue this matter further and see if the Atharva is not the bearer of a tradition which later developed into the Agama school of thought and worship, culminating in the prolific systems covered by the name Tantra."

And indeed it is so. For, as Sri Aurobindo points out, the course of the religious-spiritual awakening and development in these early societies was closely paralleled by a growth of occult knowledge and practice. Whether in India or Egypt or the other Mediterranean countries, the Mystics who were the leaders of society, not only fathomed the depths of the soul but were equally occupied in discovering the secrets of Nature, in delving into the depths of the mysteries that opened behind and beyond the physical universe. They probed into these secrets and sought to gain control over their powers even as the scientists of today aim at an increasing control over the forces of physical Nature. And it is a fragment of this tradition that is found recorded in the Atharva Veda. The Tantra takes up and carries forward this line of life and thought, harmonises it, as far as possible, with the developments, religious, spiritual and social, that marked the later Indian societies. We do not need to dwell more on this topic at the moment. Suffice to say that far from being a manual of charms and magic, white and black, the Atharva Samhita is a rich souvenir of the spiritual and the occult heritage of ancient India.

The subject-matter of the treatise before us is what is known as the *Vrātya Kāṇḍa* and forms the fifteenth section of the Atharva text (Shaunaka recension)[1]. The Book of Vratya, consisting of 220 prose Mantras whose seer is Atharva and the Deity Vratya, is singular in that no authoritative commentator has dealt with it. Even Sayana, the author observes, passed it by with just a short introductory paragraph. It has been left alone owing to its obscurity. It is however fortunate that the text has found an able and sympathetic commentator in the person of Dr. Sampurnanandji who is known for his erudite scholarship in Sanskrit and Hindi and it is particularly gratifying that an English version of his original commentary in Sanskrit, *Śrutiprabhā*, is now made available so as to reach a wider circle.

Now, at the very outset the question arises, who is *Vratya*? The author points out that normally the word would apply to one who has

[1] It forms part of the eighteenth Kanda of the Paippalada recension.

not been initiated into the Vedic sacraments and hence not competent to participate in its ritual. But also the term came to denote certain tribes, nomadic and backward, who were outside the pale of Aryan society and paid no heed to its ethos. Vratya also applied to the Sannyasin or the recluse who was not a practicant of the Vedic religion and to whom the injunctions of the Veda did not apply. But this is not all. In the Veda the word *Vrātya* signifies the supreme God Himself. For the Paramatman is the *Vrātya par excellence*. He is bound by nothing, attached to nothing. He is indeed the base and the continent of all; yet he transcends all; he is the ultimate Vratya.

The text describes the birth of the cosmos out of the conscient Being of Brahman, the Vratya. The Paramatman moves into the poise of the Creator, the Prajapati who beholds 'the gold within himself and gives birth to it' i.e. manifests the Truth-Substance with which he is charged. From this One Substance issues the manifold creation of the Gods, the Powers, the Manes, Men, Plants and Animals—the entire universe governed by His Will and Power.

He who seeks and realises in himself this Knowledge of the Godhead, verily becomes himself a Vratya and functions as a living centre for the radiation of this Truth of Brahman.

The supreme Vratya is himself manifest here as the Virat Purusha and he is to be approached and adored in each of the forms that people this variegated creation.

This in substance is the theme of the book which has been developed in the picturesque language so natural to the fresh, imaginative and symbolic mentality of the Vedic Poet.

The Commentary is lucid, learned and live with the spirit of the Shruti. It is pleasing to note when called upon by the demands of the text, the author does not hesitate to step beyond the confines of the traditional interpretation[2] though in certain portions one cannot help feeling that the commentator could have pursued, with greater results, the line of spiritual interpretation which is as old as the Veda itself and has been revived and restated in recent times by Sri Aurobindo.

Speaking of *Satya* and *Rita* born of the Tapas, the writer does not

[2] For instance, commenting on the text: *He became Eka-vratya. He grasped the bow; that verily is Indra's bow*, the author leaves the usual meaning of rainbow and observes: The bow is the supreme power, the aggregate of all powers and all forces. Vak says, 'I give the bow to Rudra to destroy the enemies of the Veda with arrows.' etc. (P. 19)

treat them as synonyms as many commentators do. Their distinct connotation and use at the hands of the Vedic seers does not escape his keen mind. He writes: 'Both these words are commonly translated as Truth, in spite of the fact that they are often mentioned together and obviously stand for different concepts. It is true that in common parlance, they do mean truth but in philosophical, specially Vedic literature, they have a different connotation. Rita means the immutable law of nature and Satya the equally inescapable law of morality.' (P.18)

We are afraid the significance of these terms is wider and other. Satyam in the Veda (and the Upanishad) stands not for morality, veracity or any other human standard or law of conduct but for the essential Truth of existence (*Sat*). There is a Satyam of the infra-human order in creation where the law of morality does not hold good even as there is a Satyam of the supra-human order. There is a truth that bases every form, every being, every existence. Each form, individual or universal, has its Truth, Satya, which it is its business to manifest. This fundamental Truth at the base of every existence is *Satyam* and the Knowledge corresponding to this Truth, the Truth-Consciousness, what Sri Aurobindo calls the ordered truth of active being, is *Ritam.*

We are unable to agree that the *gold* which Prajapati saw in himself and gave birth to (XV.I.1.2) refers to 'the sum-total of the residual effects of the virtuous and vicious acts of the jivas during the life-cycles of the preceding universe.' In the Process of manifestation, the Jivas and their samskaras, arise much later or farther than the stage at which the Brahman perceives himself as the Hiranyagarbha. He manifests freely out of his own supreme Will. The Brahman is self-poised as the Creator Hiranyagarbha and regards in his own Being the Substance of Truth—the Gold—which seeks to manifest.

The get up of the book is lavish in keeping with the standard associated with the Publishers who have made a name for themselves in the publication of authoritative literature on the Tantra. It is to be hoped that the present volume is only the first of their series on the Vedic lore.

M. P. PANDIT

India's Ancient Literature, *by Kewal Motwani*, M.A., Ph. D. Published by Ganesh & Co. Ltd., Madras 17. Price Re 1/-

Ancient Indian literature is one of the greatest creations of the human mind. And it was a mind different in many ways from the modern in that it was a spiritual one in constant communion with a higher than mental consciousness. That is why whatever the ancients wrote remained for ever as their original and imperishable contribution to the world of knowledge. No mere literary works, these creations inspired and motived by the inward urge of the Indian mind mirror the soul of a great people, revealing in many ways how that soul endeavoured through the ages to exceed the limitations of the finite and ascend to the heavens of the Infinite. They were also equally unique in their vastness and comprehensiveness, and both of these challenge comparison. Where on the whole earth is there a literature whose richness and extent outstrip the human mind ? Thousands of these manuscripts still lie hidden in homes in interior regions all over the country and held as sacred objects of worship. There are a large number of them in private collections not easily accessible to curio-hunters. Thousands of them were destroyed by alien vandals when they burnt temples and universities the greatest of which was that international centre of learning at Nalanda, of which one of the three largest libraries was called *Ratnasagar*, The Ocean of Jewels. This unimaginable vastness of Indian literature is due to the comprehensiveness of knowledge the ancients possessed. From the inspired hymns of the Rigveda containing the highest knowledge of God, man and universe, it embraces all branches of human knowledge, all arts and sciences even including horse-breeding. And in every one of them there were indications of a new approach, an original standpoint.

It is this stupendous literature that the booklet under review seeks to introduce to the general reader. It consists of a series of articles the author contributed to the *Ceylon Observer*, intending them evidently for readers who do not have much acquaintance with ancient India's cultural achievements. The ten short chapters cover the creations of her more than four thousand years of literary activity. They include the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Epics, the Dharmashastras, the Puranas, the Tantras and the works on Yoga. It seems the author has not strictly followed the chronology of the periods to which these works are generally attributed. His aim is to give an idea of the fundamental teachings contained in these works. He has had not even a few words to say, by the way, about their

literary excellence, about the language which is the vehicle of those teachings.

The Vedas are given their proper place in the cultural evolution of India as a source of 'moral and social values and virtues'. This is not saying the whole truth, in particular, about the Rigveda, the earliest religious literature of the world. There is evidence in his treatment of the subject that the author is acquainted with the esoteric exegesis of the Riks revealed by Sri Aurobindo. A reference to this as also to 'the intuitive and inspired rhythmic utterance, the *mantra*', would have added to the value of the book, not only because it is unique but also because it has a bearing on the historic development of humanity towards its divine destiny. An idea of the central teaching of the Upanishads may be had from the five pages in the book devoted to this greatest age of ancient India's spiritual endeavour. The reader may naturally expect to be given a glimpse of the lives and activities of the Vedantic Seers to whom India owes her spirituality. He might also have been told that the Upanishads are 'a kind of poetry, word of vision, rhythm of the spirit,—that has not been written before or after.'

The literary importance of the Gita is bound up with the great Epic of which it is a part. But since our author's aim is to hint at the teaching rather than literature, he takes up the Gita to point out that 'the resolution of all dichotomy of our existence into a Supreme Unity and of the social conflict into a harmonious progressive social order is the central theme of the Gita.' The Epics come in for a brief treatment through very bare outlines of their stories as the basis of their grand teachings pointing to the moral and intellectual advancement of the race in those heroic periods of its history. Then are given a few words on the esoteric significance of the Tantrik discipline, which are followed by a brief reference to the vast literature of the Puranas, a storehouse of knowledge which has yet to be assessed in its psychological and historical significance.

The Dharmashastras again are another comprehensive sociological literature of ancient India, of which the author gives some suggestive glimpses. These codes of conduct are elaborations of earlier ideas originally sprung from the intuitive insight of 'the former fathers of the race' who evolved the concept of Dharma as the basic line of man's individual and collective development.

The book concludes with a very rapid survey of the various methods of Yogic discipline which the author characterises as 'the art and science

of self-integration'. 'Self-integration' is a term of modern psychology. To give it an extended meaning and to apply it to the traditional Yogas of India would require explanation of the various Yogic stages and processes of purification through which the seeker has to pass in order that all the parts of his being, so purified and perfected, may fit into the integrality of the Spirit.

A reference to the classical literature, that exquisite literary creation of India's aesthetic mind, would have made the introductory survey complete.

Since the author has said nothing about Buddhist literature, it were better if the author had spoken of the literary value of Sanskrit, the most perfect language of the world, its wonderful grace and sublimity, its incomparable capacity to express every kind of thought on every subject, of which human mind is capable. This would serve to attract the general reader more readily than abstruse ideas of spirituality.

It is a laudable attempt the author has made in this booklet to arouse the interest of our countrymen in the splendid spiritual content of the race. As such, we commend it to all true lovers of the land who would find in it material to sustain and deepen that love.

S.M.

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